



Climate Resilience in Conversation

Webinar

October 23, 2025

TRANSCRIPT BEGINS

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alert, saving the planet with Indigenous Knowledge. We'll share perspectives and insights from Indigenous practices and experiences from working in the field.

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Next slide, please. Let's get right to it. We'll now start our Q&A.

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So folks, again, if you have questions, feel free to drop them in the Q&A chat box at the bottom of your screen.

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We have some questions for our panelists, and would also love to hear from you.

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So for all the panelists, when we talk about climate resilience, the definition can sometimes feel abstract.

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In your specific area of expertise, be it law, policy.

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Creativity, recreation, or Indigenous knowledge. What is a concrete metric or sign that a community is truly becoming more resilient, rather than just adapting temporarily?

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big question to start.

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Well, I, uh, I don't want to hog the mic here, but Sophie, this is a really tough question, and I might kind of ease us into it, because I think my response is actually quite a bit more abstract and intangible.

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And that's because where I come from, the communication side, I'm a communications director in my day job.

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Um, and then the creative side, thinking about haiku poetry and having written about climate change.

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Um, this is an overwhelming topic for most people, and the phrase climate anxiety is something that we're hearing more of these days.

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And it's... it's really real. And climate resilience is the opposite side of that coin, I think, for me in this regard.

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How do you build resilience within yourself? How do you cope with that anxiety? And... Um, you're asking for concrete things. Well, we're all part of this fight, and we aren't going to be able to be a part of it if we aren't resilient internally... resilient internally. And so.

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How do you build resilience within yourself? Is this by taking action? Is this by making time in nature to fill your cup and remind yourself.

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what you're fighting for. Is this by expressing yourself through art or music? And... I... I think it's crucial that everyone feels empowered to act, otherwise we aren't going to get those other concrete.

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steps, achievements, accomplishments that I'm sure Rob and Daniel are going to talk about. And... Um, I'll use myself as an example here, um... Because these past 10 months have been among the hardest that I have felt or experienced, and...

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As I mentioned, in my day job, I am... I am just responding and reacting to the myriad attacks.

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Uh, on our wild lands, public lands. conservation, climate, and I've been exhausted, and... Um, you know, there have been a... protests over weekends that I've wanted to attend, but I didn't. And I feel guilty saying that out loud to many people here online, but.

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it was because my heart couldn't take it. That was the anxiety I was feeling. So instead, I went camping. I communed with the places I love.

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and told them, I am working on it. I am sorry for what we are doing, and I am trying here, and there are so many of us who are trying, I promise you.

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And so, resilience for me was that response to my anxiety. So... Ask yourself, how do you pick yourself up, and whatever that is, do it.

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Thank you, Maggie. Rob or Daniel, we'd love to hear from you.

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Yeah, I'll weigh in here. So. Here's one of the challenges. Everything that Maggie said is right on target.

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This is a very complex problem. It's a global phenomenon, but it expresses itself uniquely in every different biome, ecosystem.

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place on the planet. The common denominator we know is water. Some people are going to have more water than they ever wanted.

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Some people are not going to have enough water.

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to live. To survive. Uh, so, rather than, sort of.

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you know, give you some kind of researchers'. you know, metric or measurement of, here's what success should look like.

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Uh, the work I've been doing is very much community engaged. It's about the people in a Pacific place.

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The knowledge, deep knowledge they have about a place.

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I think you gauge success. By asking the community.

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that you are working with. Do you see success? Do you feel more resilient? What does resilience look like? I guess... My way of responding to this is we know climate change doesn't have a one-size.

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fits-all solution. And it doesn't have a one-size-fits-all metric for how you can.

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Uh, in particular places, you know, measure resilience. I think resilience is very much.

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uh, community. grounded. It's... resilience in place. That means the people.

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the ecosystem. And so, you know, I would argue that.

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But we need today are researchers. who have the knowledge, skill, and the ability.

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to be able to engage. peoples, in places, listen.

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to what their concerns are, the problems they are identifying.

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And they will help us researchers. come up with an appropriate measure.

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You know, for what resilience looks like. I couldn't agree more with the point Maggie made. Right now, resilience may be nothing more.

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them feeling like there's. some room for hope.

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You know, for a better future for your children, your grandchildren, and we like to say, within our Indigenous communities.

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That seven generations into the future. Right now, a lot of people are feeling like.

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There's not much hope. And that is a problem.

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I think, uh, Maggie and Daniel have it. I mean, you have to pay attention to communities and how people are feeling and what they want.

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And that's going to depend. on, uh, on different communities, obviously.

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Uh, one of the things, uh, from my past is I, I, uh, uh, was a, uh.

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Uh, in the Obama administration at the EPA working on climate resilience, and I mention this because.

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When you're in an agency or at the government level, and particularly when you've got money available.

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definitions become really important, and it's hard sometimes to say, oh, well, that's resilient and that isn't, right? And so, one of the things that we started to look at, and this isn't by any stretch.

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a definition for every situation, but it might help guide things.

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is that we often looked for. programs, initiatives.

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uh, projects. In which there was some attention paid to future-oriented data, as opposed to looking backwards to try to, you know, prepare for last year's storm, but looking forwards.

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We looked to see if people were monitoring how well their work.

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and their preparation was going. And if they were reviewing it in the future.

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Because then if they reviewed it, they could say, oh, well, we did this well, and we did this other thing not very well. And so, an example that's a... more of an institutional example, but I think is interesting is...

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Uh, we have a huge problem right now with the power grid, as many people know, and our power grid is not prepared for all of the changes that storms and heat.

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And, um. Uh, and... and floods are going to bring. And we've seen that on and on again.

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Uh, one thing, though, after Hurricane Sandy, is that because of some legal pressure.

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Con Ed, uh, was Consolidated Edison, was charged with becoming more.

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climate resilience in legal terms. And what that meant was they had to consult the Lamont-Dougherty Earth Observatory at Columbia, and they had to say, okay.

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Let's prepare for 28 inches of sea level rise in the next 50 years. Let's establish an upper heat range by 2080.

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They're integrating underground heat temperatures, uh, you know, from 2080.

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And they put this plan together for how their grid is going to survive.

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these future projections. And then they revise it every few years when they get more information.

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And then they monitor it, they have to report it, and if they don't report it well, and if they're not being resilient in the ways that they've described in their agreement, they might not be able.

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to change their rates, to raise their rates in order to fund.

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some of the changes they want to make. So sometimes definitions.

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are really important, particularly when you're talking about, you know, legal structures.

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And companies, uh, and large operations that you want to keep accountable. That's not to say that.

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communities themselves shouldn't be defining their own issues and identifying their own issues.

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Uh, but, you know, future-oriented data, monitoring, and reviewing, and then revising.

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Those are things that companies have to do, and honestly, households should do, too, and we could probably talk about that as well.

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Thanks, everyone, and Maggie, thanks for answering that question in the chat.

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Um, kind of moving into the space of beyond discussion.

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So, this conversation aims to do just that, right? Move toward a bit... more towards solutions, at least.

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So for a student or activist seeking to make a real-world impact, what is the single most important action they can take this week.

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to bridge the gap between policy discussion and concrete community resilience.

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Again, another, uh, light topic for y'all.

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I went first last time, so it's one of you guys.

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Yeah. Oh, well, I was just gonna say, yeah, thank you for the light topics. No, these are really.

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Good questions, and they're good because you have to think, you have to kind of, you know.

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do an assessment of where you're at and your relationality in all of this.

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So, here's... I'll give you two answers. Here's the real quick answer.

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Uh, the real quick answer is recognize that no matter what you do, good or bad, it has a consequence.

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It's consequential in this larger environment. I think the... one of the things that everyone.

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could do is to start really developing. a mindfulness.

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about in our everyday life, about... our carbon footprint.

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about the water we use, about the food we eat.

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about our own health. And, you know, we all know, since Danny Rock.

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Water is alive, right? But... Unlike my relatives 200 years ago, who.

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Every morning would get up, and in one of their first.

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acts of everyday living. go to water, and in that process of going to the water.

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Give thanks to the water. for what it was giving them.

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How many of us in the kind of worlds we live turn on the shower in the morning, turn on the faucet, and say.

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Thank you, water. We are so insulated, in some ways isolated.

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You know, from the natural world, that we forget that we live in a world full of gifts. None of us had to fill out a credit application to come into this world.

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That first breath of life was a gift. We live as, uh, my good friend Robin Wall Kimmer would say, in a world of abundance, but we're told we live in a world of scarcity.

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Become mindful. And in your behavior, in your con... conduct, you can embody the change that we need to see.

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That's a... that... that was a short answer that turned into the long answer, so I'll stop right there.

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I just want to pick up on that, because I think that's wonderful.

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This idea of being mindful and thoughtful. about things that you already use and that you already care about. So sometimes, you know, I talk to students, or I.

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people on, uh, uh, that I meet on, uh, you know, on a book tour or whatever it is.

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Yeah.

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And people will say, well, I'm not, you know, a climate scientist, I'm not interested in climate science or whatever, but I want to do something. And I say, well, find something that you do care about, right? So maybe... Uh, maybe you care about children.

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Yeah.

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And... and playgrounds, you know, maybe your teacher, something like that. And so, then you can start saying, oh.

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Well, when there's extreme heat. The slides get really hot, and kids burn their, uh... burn their legs, right?

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Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

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Yeah.

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Which is the thing. Um... or I have a, you know, a grandmother, grandfather who goes to the bus stops and, uh, you know, to take the bus, and.

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she has to wait at the bus stop too long, and there's no shade cover.

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Yeah.

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Right? So, all of a sudden, you can say, that is a... That's a climate issue. You didn't know it was? You thought it was about your grandmother, you thought it was about the school system.

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But it's actually a climate issue, and, you know, whether maybe you like wine, maybe you like, uh.

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Uh, you know, let's say you like wine, and you're all of a sudden, you're learning about what wineries might be closing, or what wineries are in trouble because of climate change.

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And then when you have these... this learning. You can talk about it with people who care about the same thing.

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Oh, did you know this kind of wine in Italy is going to be more precious now, and that the workers are being laid off as a result of that? You know, then you can talk about it, not in terms of, like, labor issues in Italy, or.

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climate change, you can talk about it in terms of something that you already really care about.

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And then the very last thing, so sort of learning, talking.

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And the very last thing is thinking about, well, what might you.

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for you within a group. be able to do that might affect.

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some change, whether that's just trying to get a canopy over a bus stop.

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Um, or a canopy over a playground. Or, um... or thinking about, you know, re... re... redec... you know, deciding where you're going to get your wine, or what these sorts of things are,

because I think it's that... it may not be mindfulness in the spiritual sense, but it's mindfulness, it's thoughtfulness in the sense of.

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Yeah.

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of sort of understanding. what's happening around you, and that we are... we're all connected to that.

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Man, well, now I'm glad I'm going third, because you guys really nailed it. And, uh, I think, Rob, what you're mentioning, you know, find what you care about, that's your entry point. You don't have to care... I mean, you should care, but you don't have to be the expert in.

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Uh, solar power. I certainly am not. I care about it, but I am leaving that to the solar experts.

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I care about wildlife protection, so how can I enter that world and be a voice for it?

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Now.

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And then, Daniel, with the mindfulness, I just think this is so, so relevant, and... Um, I want to build on that because, too, think about what you're consuming, and we don't just mean.

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Nope.

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food, but we mean purchasing. So what's the source and story behind that wooden table that you just purchased? Or... where did that seafood come from, and how was it caught? Think about.

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what went into the resources that we otherwise. kind of take for granted, and... You said something, Daniel, that I just thought was really... poignant, and that is, we have become so insulated, and I think we've...

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Most of us have really lost touch with the Earth, and... a story that really painted this, uh, for me a number of years ago.

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I was traveling in Bali, and I was doing a climate story on rising seas, and I was just in the back of a taxi cab, and I asked my driver.

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Have you ever heard about climate change? Do you know what this is? And... he... he said, no, I've never heard of it, but, um... You're talking about the Earth, right, and the planet? Well, I do think that we've lost touch with the planet, and I think that.

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The Earth has started to act up on us, and it's getting angry.

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And then he went on to describe that Bali's largest volcano had started to bubble, and within a week's time, it actually erupted.

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And I thought, yeah, so there's someone who's paying attention, doesn't know about climate change, but sees that.

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we have lost touch, and we need to be more mindful and aware. And so, I think both of you really nailed it, and so I'm just... echoing these great points that you made, but for the sake of any listeners on here today who are like me, and you're like, well, I really need something tangible, can you give me an action?

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They need homework. Um... I think first and foremost, what's... what's happening in your town or community? Are there town hall meetings?

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Who are your local elected officials? Um, depending on where you live, these people go by different names. It might be a county commissioner, it might be a delegate.

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Or you could look at, um, your state representative's.

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Call them. What are they doing with regard to climate? Start there, and if they have an agenda, or there's something about their plan that you disagree, agree with.

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Schedule a town meeting, or just voice your opinion, because these people are in office to represent you, and the more that your voice is heard, the more that they have to represent you.

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Um, so those are things that you can do this week, and just figure out who represents you, make some phone calls.

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Um, another thing that is kind of an easy lift is sign up for action alerts. There are so many groups out there that are trying to.

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help you become an activist, whether that means you're a keyboard warrior and you're signing petitions.

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or they're helping you to write letters to the editor with your local newspaper. There are groups out there, um, some of my favorites are the Climate Reality Project and Five Calls. They make it easy for you to get started.

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So, there are definitely tangible things you can do this week, but I think Rob and Daniel just said.

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you know, we need to be more mindful and find your entry point that matters to you. Those are the biggest takeaways, I would say.

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Thank you all. Um, and this next question just sort of builds off of this, just kind of drawing it.

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from the individual to the collective. Um, both creativity and Indigenous knowledge emphasize the importance of human connection to nature and to one another.

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In the context of building physical resilience against increasing climate disasters.

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How crucial is this sense of community and relational well-being, and what role does it play compared to, say, building seawalls or changing zoning laws?

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Oh, I think it's huge. Let me just, um... so I'm here in New Orleans, where I live, and I live on a street, and I, you know, during Hurricane Katrina, this house was still here, and we were here, and there were, you know, 5 feet of water, whatever.

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People in the... people in the neighborhood around here who... who... owned homes at the same time. They remember that really well.

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And there are... I'm just going to give you two ways that you might imagine people adapting in some resilient way.

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One is money was made available, you know, at one point, for people to elevate their homes if they wanted to, and there are a few people on the street who elevated their homes 12 feet.

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Literally, up in the air, right? That, you know, whatever, it protects them, but it doesn't protect anybody else in the community.

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Um, and that's fine, I mean, it's their property.

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Um, but it's not going to save the neighborhood or even, you know.

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conserve a neighborhood after a heavy kind of a flood.

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Um, that anyone would want to still live in.

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Um, you could have taken money like that. I'm not talking about individual people, I'm talking about the government. You could have had money like that and made it.

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Uh, develop it in a way so that it would have produced more protection for a community.

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And in fact, we do that ourselves in my community. We haven't, thankfully, had many.

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hurricane evacuations in the re... certainly not in this particular season.

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Um, but everybody, all the neighbors talk to one another, and they know the people who moved here more recently and don't know very much about hurricanes or storm surge.

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We watch out for one another, we talk about.

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Uh, you know, in our network about what hotels you might go to that take dogs or cats, that kind of thing.

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Um, and uh, I have a... happen to have a generator for my house. When the power goes out, people in my neighborhood.

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Know that they can store their medicine in our refrigerator.

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Uh, or that they can come and sit by a spinning fan.

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Um, and these things sound small. But it's about community, and you really have to know one another in order.

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for that to work. And one of the things I worry about when we talk about, let's say, extreme heat in urban areas and stuff, are the people.

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who often have the worst time. Our older people who don't know a lot.

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of others in their neighborhoods. Their windows are all barred, you know, closed, they're afraid of crime, these kinds of things, and nobody knows to look in on them.

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Uh, on my street, we know the people who are, uh, who are single.

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Right? And there are people who look after them, in terms of... when there's extreme heat and things. And, um... It's something that you kind of have to build, and it's very special when you get it.

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But I think we lose that, particularly in a society where people move around a lot.

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I'm happy to jump in just with some thoughts, because Sophie, you asked yet another very heavy question, but I think what it came down to was what role does community play in.

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Community really is everything, just as Rob said. I think... Um, you know, it could be just your familial community, it could be your neighborhood community that Rob is talking about, it could also be... as big as, um, your community of everybody who considers himself a nature lover. You know, we have digital communities as well, and...

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Um, I think about the various communities I'm a part of, and hold tightly to.

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of the shared values that we have, and I'm lucky because in my day job, I work with like-minded people who believe in sharing this planet with all the life in it, plants, animals, insects, and they are going to get equally excited when I talk about.

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Having seen a praying mantis on my front stoop earlier today.

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Um, I think about, uh, digital virtual communities that I am lucky to know exist. For example, there's one.

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Um, that I have shared with my father, who is disabled. It's called Birdability, and it's a non-profit dedicated to making the outdoors more accessible through the joys of birding.

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And this is one of the most wholesome and inclusive and welcoming groups, and there is a place for my father there to feel like he is a part of a community, rather than isolated.

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So, I think, um, this answer is really just kind of... Circling back to how I started out answering your questions, Sophie, and that is about resilience, and... this community and resilience, these are all part of...

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um, empowering ourselves. And feeling like we are not isolated in any of this as we try to move forward through.

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A very existential time.

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No, great responses, and based on that, I'll just take a sort of an example of what we're doing, and.

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the rising voice is changing coast convergence Science Research Hub, which I'm facilitating. It's an NSF-funded grant.

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Knock on wood, still funded at this moment. And, um, you know, we've really taken it.

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We've taken an Indigenous lens to the work that we're doing in convergence science.

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And building on this idea of community, I think one of the greatest lessons humans humans need to.

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reacquaint themselves with is we really ought to begin defining.

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a notion of practical community and governance, including the land, the air, the water, and the plants and animals. Those are the largest.

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communities, we humans are but one. member of. And I think that is really an important.

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point, because, you know, if you think about it, and this is perfectly consistent with modern biology, right?

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is that we misspeak every time we talk about the world full of natural resources.

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The world isn't full of natural resources, folks. Just pick up any biology book today. It's full of natural relatives.

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We have kinship with the balance of creation. We don't have... a legal system yet. We don't have... policymakers who fully understand this, but I think that's really our challenge.

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is to begin to... use every bit of energy we can to say, you know, we've got... there's a reason we call this age... Earth scientists now are saying we live in the age of the Anthropocene.

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It's because humans are literally changing some of the fundamental dynamics of the Earth's.

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thin biosphere. Who's doing it? We are.

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And so far, guess what? The changes we've made have not been real good.

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For the biological diversity of the planet, for the habitat, you know, uh... The survival of unique habitats.

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Water quality, air quality. We've got to move very quickly away from a notion of environmental justice being anthropocentric.

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It's not all about us, folks. It's about placing ourselves in right relations.

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with that larger community, we are a part of. And guess what? We got good work for everyone, for teachers.

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for innovators, for creators, for lawyers, for policy makers.

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Because this is going to be a heavy lift. We're entangled in systems that are not.

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really, um, based on that kind of thinking. And yet, I think, you know, many of us, when we start talking this way, I see people nodding and things.

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You get it. We're entangled in systems that don't.

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and aren't built, you know, to kind of create that broader sense of community. So, that's what I'd like to contribute to this community.

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uh, perspective. Let's remember, hey. community involves the land, the air, the water, the fish, the plants, and the animals.

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It's not all about us.

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Thank you for that. Rob, did you have something you wanted to add? Or were we just unmuted?

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No, I'm good, yeah.

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Okay, good. Um, thanks everyone. This is our last question for all the panelists. This webinar emphasizes building a just future.

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What is the biggest challenge you see in ensuring that the benefits and burdens of climate resilience strategies.

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For example, new infrastructure, relocation, resource management. are distributed equitably across different socioeconomic and racial groups.

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And what would be one solution to overcome it?

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Well, I'm gonna pick one example, because, as Maggie reminded me.

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Today is Marine Sanctuary Day, and some of you probably didn't know that.

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He may not know where a marine sanctuary is, but let's just say.

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that, uh, in the United States, it's a type of a... of an area, like a national park, almost, where you designate.

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an area of ocean, and you say you're going to protect it in certain ways.

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This is one of the most important climate resilience issues.

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Um, around right now, particularly when we're talking about the non-human world, but certainly when we're talking about the human world.

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I'm writing a book on oceans right now, and I've spent a few times now in French Polynesia looking.

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Um, at different ways of protecting coral, for instance.

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So, all of this is going to fit together.

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Um, we have... the UN has a goal, 190... countries, signed a goal saying that they wanted to protect.

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30% of the ocean surface with the equivalent of marine sanctuaries.

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Um, because that's how you're going to protect any of the seafood anywhere in the world.

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And all of the... all of the things that benefit human beings and the rest of the world.

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Um, but we've had a really hard time putting those.

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sanctuaries together, in part because. Fisher folk, local fisher folk, in many places.

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who are against that sort of thing, because that's what their living is based on.

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Uh, I was at a UN conference on the ocean in Nice, uh, just this.

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June. And French Polynesia announced the largest, I'll call it marine sanctuary.

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In the history of the world. Um, it's million... square kilometers.

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Um, it will move our goal. several percentage points to getting to that 30%.

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And it took over 10 years to figure out, and one of the reasons they couldn't get it figured out early is because nobody was involving the local populations in the communities.

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And what they ended up doing. For 10 years, is they worked with local Indigenous groups.

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Islanders who had for centuries. developed very small local village-organized.

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Um, phishing rules. They would close certain fisheries on an island off, and then they'd open them up, and they'd close them again, and they'd rotate and move around. They were all very dynamic.

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Um, and everybody, I mean, they've been doing this for hundreds of years. Everyone figured.

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Um, that this is finally a way to preserve fish and to preserve coral, which 25% of all of our.

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Seafood is based on coral in one way or another.

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And so these, uh, this giant water park that I'm just telling you about.

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was designed explicitly with, they call them rahuis, these small.

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village, local operations, um, that, that deal with what they call artisanal fishing.

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And, um... It's an amazing thing that they're doing in Indonesia and elsewhere, and although we're thinking very globally now in this particular example.

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The point is, is that you can't move the needle on these really big things unless you.

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start with the smaller. Uh, with the smaller groups that are connected to it. And these are... and I fished with these folks, I've spearfished and dived with these folks, and learned an incredible amount.

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And they're concerned about their livelihoods, but they're also, as Daniel says, they're very concerned with the entire ecosystem. You know, these are groups that have seen.

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All of these plants and animals for centuries as parts.

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of their family in one way or another. Um, and that's... 92% of the people in French Polynesia are in favor of this giant water park. Almost all of the water in the jurisdiction of French Polynesia.

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is protected in this way. And you don't get that kind of buy-in unless you get it at the community.

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uh, value-based level.

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Yeah, I'm gonna...

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And Daniel, you're in Kansas, so I'm glad... I'm glad that you're oppressed by this. I used to live in Kansas City, so I know... I know Haskell.

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Yeah. You bet. Well, you know, it's funny being right here in the.

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Heartland of the United States, and then having this big.

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research hub that's doing work, and. Hawaii, the Big Island, Juialoha Kijola, were involved in supporting their whole fish pond agriculture... regeneration effort.

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We're working three communities in Puerto Rico. The poster child of, unfortunately, climate change in Alaska, the barrier island of Sheshmerif.

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Uh, you know, Louisiana. And so, when I think about this, we've kind of... there's a couple of common denominators that we all recognize, no matter where we are.

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and the planet. And when we think about policy, we're really talking about our human.

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you know, engagement, and our thinking, and how we can hopefully improve situations. Um, I think it should... we should be all in right now.

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on children. I think you brought it up, Rob, and it's so true. I mean... The most vulnerable people to the extreme events that are going to be coming.

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are the elderly and our children. And our children, I think right now.

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Everyone should be all about. Children's health. Oh, that reminds me, so I'll put something in the chat, um... the rising voices, Changing Coast Convergent Science. I'm housed here at Haskell.

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is going to do our second annual. Children's health and climate change symposium on the 13th and 14th.

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of November. That site will take you to a place where you can register.

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You're all invited, okay? Um, I think right now, if you want to get a good.

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human community. you know, point of entree.

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Let's talk about our children. the futures they're gonna have, the kind of education they need.

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Because we really need to be preparing them to face some incredible.

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challenges. And... They're not gonna be prepared.

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without that strong sense of... Self-worth, identity.

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confidence, and most importantly, love. You know, I... we may be the only, um... NSF project that I know of that we talk about how, in our work.

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We always lead with love. love for the balance of creation.

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For our human relatives, for our more than or different than human relatives.

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And that's a... that's a... a big ask, but I would say one of the things, if we really... want to start thinking about what.

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is ahead of us. A focus right now on children, on their health, on their well-being.

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on their education. That is... that is critical. So, we've really put an investment. We're one of... may be, uh, not a lot.

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of NSF scientific research projects have places for undergraduate education.

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research and internships. We've built that into ours. So, we are doing internships with tribal college students.

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with Haskell students, internships during the academic year, internships, and the idea is, you know, we want to... we want to invest.

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So that, you know, our tribal communities won't have to be paying someone else for advice, but they can look.

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to their own community members. to come back as... the experts to help them address the challenges they need. So, this is an overall in policy, I think.

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this point of entry, when we think of our human relationality.

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Children ought to be something we can all agree on, the importance of children, their health.

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Their education, their welfare.

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Now, I don't have anything eloquent to add, like Rob or Daniel just offered, except for perhaps a somewhat angry response, and that is.

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How do we make a more just and equitable future? And... I think... Daniel, you mentioned this earlier, we need policymakers who are aware.

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and, uh, who understand how entwined and interconnected we are, not only to the planet, but to everyone else, and... Um, you know, if it were up to me, I would say, let's... let's vote out everybody who's not...

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paying attention, or who doesn't have this frame of mind to move forward. So... my short and sweet answer is.

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We need better policy makers.

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Maggie, can I ask a quick question? Because we actually got a couple, or we had some questions about the visual arts and art, and you're.

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One of the things you're representing is literature today.

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What, um... what's the role of art in all of this? I mean, Daniel's talked about the spiritual side and the moral side.

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Yeah.

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I'm talking the wine side. What is art? have to do with this? What's the power there?

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Yeah, yeah. Are you trying to make me less angry so I can talk about creative expression, Robin?

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No, no, no, because art can be famously angry, right?

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It's... no, you are... you are entirely correct, and I think, um... Well, creative expression helps us to process our feelings and thoughts, and... Um, sometimes cope.

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with heavy emotions, and... That's actually what inspired my writing initially, well before my poetry turned into even the thought of a book. It was... Um, I really have this deep love for our country, and this land, its creatures, its people.

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and visiting every state, it's just... There is a striking individuality about it, and it creates connection, and I love meeting somebody from.

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Berea, Kentucky, and I have something to say to them, or meeting someone from Maine, and I know everything about the Midcoast. That, to me, it's creating this community, right?

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And poetry is a way to do that. Um, poetry for me was this way to express this love, and then as a climate communicator, former journalist.

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The question struck me, what happens to these beautiful places?

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Um, if we don't act, and what's a way to galvanize the people of a state, show them their cherished home.

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as it could be changed. Um, but... but even taking it kind of a step back, because I'm just talking about poetry, and one of our questions you said is about visual arts.

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Um, it was... it was Kurt Vonnegut who said, um, and I hope I get this right.

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the arts are a very human way of making life more bearable, and now while I think the arts are a way to enrich life, and there are mediums and means by which we can feel on top of the world and express all of our greatest joys.

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We're here today talking about climate change, and... In that way, I think Vonneg gets onto something, right? There is... art can help us to express that anger, that concern, that urgency, and... I think there is such a place for it. So it... for all of the creative minds who might be on this call.

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What do you want to express and how? There is no right or wrong way to do it. That's something that I'm often.

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trying to convey in my poetry workshops, actually, is... Somebody who says, well, I'm not a writer, I'm not a poet. I'm like, you don't need to be. You're human. You have thoughts. Like, that's it. That's your entry point.

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Uh, whatever that creation is. express yourself.

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So, I think if... if you are creating just for yourself to process those feelings and thoughts.

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do it. If you are creating to share it with others, do it. And there is no right or wrong in that way.

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So, that was a bit of a tangent, but, you know, completely emotive and whatnot.

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That's such a perfect segue, both of you, because I was going to ask you, Maggie, um, you know.

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In general, how does creative expression, but maybe more specifically, the haiku in your book.

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How does that move people beyond fear or denial or other strong emotions?

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Um, and motivate them towards actions, conversations with their communities, their neighbors.

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Um, you touched on this a little bit, but if you want to expand, that'd be great.

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Yeah, so for the folks on this call, what I'm referencing my book, because the point was of it to... to present each state and two other additional non-states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.

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what they represent in their natural landscapes, you know, haiku, um, the history of it, typically evocative of scenes of nature. So I wanted to show.

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These beautiful scenes. So, what is the creative expression, Sophie, to your question? It's... It's to feel proud of what we have.

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And then I wrote a second haiku for each one, and that is a foreshadowing of what's at stake if we don't act.

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So you see your cherished home and something beautiful about it, and then, oh my gosh, this stark contrast, holy smokes.

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And certainly, a haiku is only 17 syllables, so there's not a lot to play with.

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But, I think that's the fun of it, because.

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poetry is all... it's subjective. It's open to interpretation, so if I can give just enough that piques your curiosity, or there's a word that really resonates with you because you are from Louisiana, and you know exactly what I'm talking about when I say there is rhythm in the earth.

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then you have something to connect on, and maybe you want to learn more. Um, so that is kind of a little bit more, Sophie, to your question, is.

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is to why the haiku? Why trying to reach people in a new way that I just hadn't seen done before.

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and hopefully interest people in joining the climate space and climate fight.

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Maggie, Rob, Daniel, feel free to weigh in on this, even though it's not specific to y'all. We're all artists in our own way, so feel free.

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Oh, I think the arts are so important. I know I have some students on, uh, uh, in the audience today, and uh... they know that I sometimes read poetry to my classes, and some of my courses, we read novels.

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And, um. I think it's incredibly important, because it taps into the emotion the way that Maggie talks about, but it also.

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and Kirp Onigut, I think, demonstrates this. Um, is, uh, riders... non... or let me say fiction writers are the ones whose imaginations are most fertile and will go places that other people won't.

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And, you know, somebody like Kurt Vonnegut writes a lot about.

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you know, future types of societies, or what could go wrong, and uh... And this whole, uh, area of utopias and dystopias started out among philosophers.

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And the way to imagine new ways of living, both.

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good and bad. Um... I think often comes through the creative arts.

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Um, because people, you know, feel that they can explore ideas and, if you will, a safe way, right?

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Um, by... by playing them out, and I think that's just an enormously rich area. I think, uh.

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We've got a questioner who's a budding lawyer, and we'll talk about that too, I'm sure, but budding lawyers need art.

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Maybe more than anybody else.

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Well, I tell you what, this is... this is a great and... and... Maggie and Rob, you both.

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prove my point. I mean, I think... the best.

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educators are people who have this creative. capacity. You know, we talk about, you know, all the time in our work.

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talking story. And what we're doing, that I think is really tapping into creativity.

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is we are... trying to put in our project.

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media tools. And by the way, media... the tools that are available now, in terms of cameras and the technology and what it takes.

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To put on a fairly sophisticated podcast. I mean, you'd be surprised.

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for how, you know, inexpensive just getting that basic equipment can be.

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But it's not the equipment. that makes it work. It's... being able to tell a story.

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I would argue right now, what we need in scientists, with engineers, with.

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Um, you know, creative inventors. We need good storytellers.

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People get drawn in to stories. And, you know, that's what we're... that's what we're really about.

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Everyone has a story. to tell. The sad part is, is we live in a world where some people have been convinced.

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They have nothing. No story to tell, or their story's not important.

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or no one's interested in. And I think that is one of the biggest falsehoods.

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that we've got a challenge today. Every human, you know, on this planet.

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has a story to tell. And if we had the ability.

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to sit and listen? They would make us.

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better human beings, because every one of them knows something.

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I don't know. Because I'm not them.

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And I think this is... this is... this taps into that creative element, so... I really like the idea of letting, you know, young people.

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be that catalyst in communities. People like me, I'm at the point now where if something goes wrong with my phone, I call my granddaughter, and my granddaughter, 10 years old, she can probably come over and fix it for me.

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And we are... we need to... take that technology.

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And use it in a very powerful and good way.

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People tell me all the time, I'll end with this, okay? Because it's that light and dark side, right?

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People always tell me, well, what we... I'm so... so sad that we lost the storytelling traditions.

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And I say, no, we haven't lost them, but they've been co-opted. Co-opted. So, you take this out, and you get those pop-ups.

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You're having stories told to you in five. 10, 15-second burst.

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But they're not being told to you anymore, they're being sold to you by corporations.

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What we need to do is to return the art of storytelling.

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to having our family, our community, share stories that are told to us.

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not sold to us. And that's good work, and it's gonna... it's gonna take all of us, you know, to create that space, that place.

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for that to happen. We're trying to just do a little of that.

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in the RVCC Convergent Science Hub.

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Thanks, Daniel, and uh... while you have the mic, I do have.

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you know, a little bit of a question, and I want to elevate all of y'all's specific work and your books, so... kind of in that vein, and you've given us many, uh, but what's a critical lesson?

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or practice from Indigenous knowledge that communities can apply right now to build more genuine and lasting climate resilience.

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And how can non-Indigenous communities appropriately integrate this wisdom? Again, you've given us much wisdom, but.

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Okay, this is gonna sound real simple, but it's really very challenging.

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Because we've talked a lot, you know, this is the perfect segue.

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We've talked about storytelling. Um.

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I think in the nature of the kind of environment that we live in now, and including these flat-screen.

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You know, environments that we're all entangled in. Um, I think... one of the greatest pieces of wisdom.

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I have learned, and it took a long time. I had to kind of mature as a human being, and go from being a young man, all full of that anger and energy.

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to realize this. Remember, the most important communication skill you need to develop.

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is active, engaged listening. That means not always thinking about what that person's saying, so I can think, oh, how can I, you know.

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Top that, or I want to add to this or that.

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But listening. to what... your family, your community.

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And... I know... Rob and Maggie will both appreciate this. A very thorough-like statement. He probably said it somewhere, but... listening to the forest.

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listening to the mountains. They have stuff... they have a lot to teach us.

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If we can get out of this anthropocentric mindset we have, and.

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step into that world of kinship. that I think so many Indigenous people on the planet still maintain.

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That's a piece of wisdom. that I think everyone can work on trying to develop.

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How can we be better. listeners in this world. You'd be surprised what you might hear.

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Once you really pay attention.

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That's it. I'm short and sweet.

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Uh, fantastic. And we also have some questions in the chat.

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Um, I'm assuming the first question about being an environmental attorney, um.

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was relevant to Rob's earlier point, and the second question there about effective ways to tell the stories of non-humans, perhaps Daniel, so... Y'all feel free to chime in on either of those, and anyone, feel free.

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Let me just take the quick law professor question, uh, about, uh, for an aspiring environmental... bless you, uh.

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For wanting to be an environmental lawyer, for working on that. The first thing I would say, the easy answer, is do where you're... do whatever your passion.

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is because you're going to be able to find, no matter what it is you're working on, some environmental or climate angle.

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But that's probably not the easy answer you wanted. So I'm gonna say, you know, water issues, depending on where you're living. I mean, Daniel's exactly right. Energy, I think, is another huge and diverse area.

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And I think climate resilience, uh, preparing. Uh, for, uh, disastrous impacts, preparing for climate impacts in one way or another. Those are three areas.

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There's lots of different kinds of legal work in those fields.

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Mm-hmm. And a quick response to the question about how do you tell the stories of our.

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you know, more than human relatives. Here is where I think.

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Again, the arts is so important, and when I saw Maggie was going to be on this, I was so excited because.

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you know, Rob's talked about, you know, reading poetry in his classes. Believe it or not. Now, I haven't... it's yet to be done. In fact, I was just thinking about this a couple weeks ago.

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I... every year in my class, I'll just... when I'll come in and I'll just totally surprise students, and I'll say.

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We're gonna ride a haiku. And they're gonna ride a haiku today about.

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what you've experienced since you got up this morning and came to class, and then I have to give them a little lesson, you know, about those.

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Those powerful 17 syllables. Artists are the best at community... communicating, I think.

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The beauty, the wisdom, the power. of that larger community we are a part of. So I'll... I'll hold that up. By the way.

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really good scientist. understand this, too.

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That's why probably E.L. Wilson was such a well-known and distinguished biologist.

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He knew how to tell a story. And we need more people engaged in storytelling, and the artists, the mediums you use, music.

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dance. Art. poetry, literature.

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That is powerful. And you know what? It really resonates with people.

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Where, you know, it can bring that spirit and reason dimension of who we are as humans together.

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And so, I want to just give a shout out. I think the arts is a great way.

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you know, to share... those stories.

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And I know we're close on time here, but I want to add to that question that was in the chat about telling these non-human stories, because this is actually what I do in my day job. I work for Defenders of Wildlife, and so we are constantly trying to figure out.

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How do we tell people that wildlife is important?

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And, uh, while we all get it, um, sometimes you have to make the connection to people and find an entry point that relates to them.

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And sometimes that entry point is the cardinal that they see in their backyard, or the deer that they might see on the side of the road.

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Um, but to Daniel's point, which I think is a really beautiful way to enter storytelling on behalf of our non-human kin, and that is.

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think about whatever art you do want to create.

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and tell it from the perspective of that non-human kin. What might they be saying, thinking, doing.

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Because that's gonna strike... that's gonna pull some attention. Um, it's a new way of... of... Considering, and I think there are so many innumerable ways.

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to tell stories, and... It's up to all of us, so thank you guys for being here today.

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Sophie, back to you, yeah.

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Thank you. Yeah, Rob, do you have any closing remarks? I know Daniel and Maggie got to chime in a little.

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Well, I'll just say, I had mentioned I'm writing a book on oceans, and it's called The Whale Who Danced the Blues, and what I... the reason is it's called that.

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is what I'm trying to do is take a wonky story about protecting the ocean.

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Um, and the backbone of the story involves, uh.

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the tale of a single whale named Tahlequah, an orca whale in the Salish Sea who lost, um.

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a calf, and then carried it for over a thousand miles.

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And, um, it struck me as a super emotional story.

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that I'm trying to do justice to, and to get people connected to that, so that they can maybe see the other parts of the ocean that they might be.

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concerned about. And, um, so I'm learning an awful lot.

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about that, and it's kind of an artistic journey, in a way, for me, that's allowing me to explore a lot of ideas in a way that I don't normally do. So I'm very grateful to.

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Uh, to this sort of work, uh, that people do, and to the work that Maggie and Daniel are doing.

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Thank you all, and thank you so much, Maggie, Daniel, Rob, for your time, energy, and effort in this panel. We appreciate y'all.

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Um, and thank you to the folks who joined us today. Uh, please expect a follow-up email from us in the coming days with all the links and the recording.

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Um, and links to these wonderful reads as well.

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Thanks, everyone. Have a great day.

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Thank you all, have a great day.

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Take care.

TRANSCRIPT ENDS