



The 19th George Wright Society Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites

April 2 -7, 2017

Norfolk, Virginia, USA

**Traditional Territory of Virginia Algonquians:
Nansemond, Mattaponi, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi,
Rappahannock, Eastern Chickahominy, Chickahominy**

An invitation to Indigenous people to participate in a leading interdisciplinary conference on parks, protected areas, and cultural sites

Proposals being accepted for sessions and individual presentations

Indigenous-led sessions & special events • Travel grants available for Indigenous persons from Canada, Mexico & USA

www.georgewright.org/gws2017



Indigenous resource practitioners and the George Wright Society

As Indigenous peoples increasingly assert their right to manage ancestral lands and resources, land-managing agencies are given opportunities to develop new relationships with Indigenous communities. For collaboration to succeed, Indigenous resource management professionals and field-based practitioners need to meet with non-Indigenous agency personnel in a face-to-face setting. It is equally important for Indigenous resource stewards to be able to network and share experiences with one another.

The George Wright Society (www.georgewright.org) recognizes these needs and works to address them. We support the resolve of Indigenous peoples to care for their homelands and their cultures, to expand professional skills and networks, to inform non-Indigenous persons about Indigenous concerns, and to extend the range of management perspectives available to all. Founded in 1980, we are a nonprofit interdisciplinary association of people working in or on behalf of parks, protected areas and cultural sites. We are unique among professional organizations because we encourage dialogue among a wide range and diversity of people needed for protected area conservation, from historians to biologists, public agency staff to Indigenous

community elders. Currently, two of our eleven Board members are Indigenous persons, one of whom serves as President.

The George Wright Society Conference:

The GWS seeks to expand Indigenous participation in our most important activity: the George Wright Society Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites. Held every two years in different locations across the USA, the conference brings together leading professionals and practitioners who work in the protection of natural and cultural sites. The next conference will be held in Norfolk, Virginia, April 2-7, 2017. In the spirit of enabling genuine dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons, and facilitating the exchange of stories and strategies among Indigenous peoples, we offer an Indigenous Participant Travel Grant program and a track of Indigenous-focused conference content.

DEADLINES

- **Submit a proposal for a paper, poster, etc. — September 30**
- **Apply for an Indigenous Participant Travel Grant — December 31**

What happens at GWS Conferences?

These meetings are full-scale professional conferences, with a large number of plenary and concurrent sessions where people present papers, hold panel discussions or sharing circles, give workshops and so on. There is a multi-day poster session and a number of special events to provide time for people to network.

Most importantly, quite a few of the events at the GWS conference are designed by and for Indigenous persons. Our Indigenous Involvement Working Group, whose members are all Indigenous, advise the Conference Committee on how to better engage Indigenous attendees and address their interests. Here is a short description of some of the events that took place at our most recent (2015) conference.

Conference sessions

Several conference sessions are organized by Indigenous persons. Examples of past sessions include:

- *Extractive Activities in Protected Areas and Indigenous Lands*
- *Indigenous Peoples, Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights in the International Arena*
- *Indigenous Cultural Landscapes: Developing a More Inclusive Approach to Large Landscape Conservation*
- *Spirit: Anishinaabe World View on Life of Turtle Island*
- *Non-Recognized Tribal Communities Protecting Cultural & Natural Resources*
- *Tribal Marine Conservation and Marine Protected Areas*
- *Want a Sustainable Park? Ask Indigenous Peoples ... They Might Know a Thing or Two*
- *Plus individual presentations in other sessions*

Indigenous Film Night

Indigenous Film Night is a powerful and popular event open to all registrants. The evening features a welcoming reception followed by screening of short films produced by Indigenous filmmakers and collaborators, concluded by audience discussions. Through vivid images and stories, the selected films aim to connect Indigenous cultures, lands, and peoples across generations and continents. The selection underscores the knowledge, vision, perspectives, and contributions of Indigenous peoples to the management and caretaking of the earth and human cultures.

Informal Indigenous networking

While we recognize that the entire conference is an opportunity for Indigenous attendees to meet peers from all backgrounds, we specifically strive to facilitate Indigenous-to-Indigenous exchanges. Typically, we hold an orientation/welcoming meeting for Indigenous attendees on the day before the formal opening of the conference. Connections made there are strengthened through a series of informal get-togethers, the Indigenous Film Night, and by providing a designated gathering place for Indigenous participants and interested others.

Seeking meaningful involvement with local Indigenous persons

We acknowledge that the GWS Conference will take place within the traditional territory of the Virginia Algonquian nations and will reach out to and engage with these nations. We will invite them to attend our conference and participate in our welcoming meeting, and ask a tribal leader from one of these nations to formally open our conference on the first day.

Indigenous Participant Travel Grants

The George Wright Society, through the generosity of several funders, offers travel grants to support the participation of Indigenous persons in our conferences. Since 2007 the program has assisted nearly 60 Indigenous persons from the USA, Canada, and Mexico to attend the conference. We hope to expand the scope of the program for the GWS2015 conference.

Non-student Indigenous persons from Mexico, Canada, or the USA (Including US Territories) who are involved in the protection, management, or study of land, its biological/cultural systems and features, or Indigenous land rights are eligible to apply. (Indigenous persons who are full-time students at a 4-year institution or at a 2-year tribal institution can apply for a George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarship.) Grants include a registration fee waiver, a stipend to underwrite partial costs of the recipient's travel to the conference, and a year's membership in the GWS.

For more information

Visit the conference website at www.georgewright.org/gws2017 and click the "Scholarships" link. Or, contact the GWS at 1-906-487-9722, or info@georgewright.org.

Thank you!



P.O. Box 65
Hancock, Michigan 49930-0065 USA
www.georgewright.org