

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jessica Douglas

Indigenous Community Engagement Manager

503-803-8566

[jdouglas@ecotrust.org](mailto:jdouglas@ecotrust.org)

Ecotrust Announces 2025 Indigenous Leadership Award Recipients  
*Six leaders and one group will be honored at a ceremony on October 15*

Portland, Ore. – July 22, 2025 – Ecotrust is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 Indigenous Leadership Awards. This year's awards will honor six individuals—Shelly Covert, Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe; Ryan Reed, Karuk, Hupa, and Yurok; Satsan (Herb George), Wet'suwet'en Nation; Ron Goode, North Fork Mono Tribe; Tony A. (naschio) Johnson, Chinook Indian Nation; Robert Kentta, Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians—and one group, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network.

Since 2001, the Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Awards have recognized more than 80 outstanding Indigenous leaders for their unwavering dedication to strengthen self-determination and uplift the environmental, cultural, economic, and social conditions of their communities and homelands. Initially funded through a private endowment and with continued philanthropic support, the Awards have recognized the work of Indigenous leaders throughout Northern California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Southeast Alaska.

This year brought the largest group of nominations since the awards were relaunched in 2021. Awardees were nominated by other Indigenous leaders, allies, and members of their own communities. A selection committee composed of past awardees and trusted leaders carefully reviewed the nominations and was deeply inspired by the vision and leadership reflected in this powerful group.

Awards will be presented in two categories—Emerging and Accomplished Leaders—recognizing the full spectrum of leadership that sustains cultural continuity, strengthens sovereignty, and safeguards the rights and lifeways of tribes and tribal peoples across the region. In addition to individual recognitions, the selection committee chose to honor one group with a special award this year.

The 2025 cohort of Indigenous Leadership Awardees reflects a powerful breadth of vision, dedication, and impact. They are revitalizing languages across the region, returning traditional fire practices to the landscape, advancing tribal recognition and self-governance, shaping policy grounded in Indigenous knowledge, and forging new pathways for land, ocean, and community resilience.

“Ecotrust's Indigenous Leadership Award is the only such award for Indigenous leaders of the West Coast of the U.S. and Canada,” said Kara Briggs, Ecotrust's Vice President for Tribal Lands and Waters Stewardship. “The 2025 recipients represent the leading edge of Indigenous leadership, drawing deeply upon their unique cultural traditions rooted in their lands and their nations. These are leaders who we will be talking about in 100 years, ones who their Indigenous nations will write into their own history books.”

This year's Awardees will be celebrated on Wednesday, October 15, 2025, in the Main Hall of the Redd on Salmon Street, Ecotrust's regional food hub and event space, at 831 SE Salmon Street, Portland, OR 97214. More information about the 2025 Indigenous Leadership Awards ceremony is available at [ecotrust.org/indigenous-leadership-awards](https://ecotrust.org/indigenous-leadership-awards)

## **The 2025 Indigenous Leadership Award Recipients**

### **Emerging Leaders**

#### **Shelly Covert, Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe**

Executive Director of the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project

Tribal Council Member and Spokesperson for her tribe

*For her powerful voice in reversing the erasure of Nisenan people in California history, advancing federal recognition of her tribe, and sustaining Nisenan community and culture.*

#### **Ryan Reed, Karuk, Hupa, and Yurok**

Co-founder and Program Director of FireGeneration Collaborative

Former member of the Northwest Forest Plan Federal Advisory Committee

*In recognition of his leadership to restore fire as a practice of Indigenous land stewardship, advance policy that supports tribal fire practices, and inspire new generations of leaders.*

### **Accomplished Leaders**

#### **Satsan (Herb George), Wet'suwet'en Nation**

One of the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs of the Frog Clan

Founder of the Centre for First Nations Governance

Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD), University of Victoria

*For his pivotal leadership in advancing and transforming Indigenous self-governance globally and empowering First Nations to reclaim and exercise their inherent rights.*

#### **Ron Goode, North Fork Mono Tribe**

Chairman of the North Fork Mono Tribe

*In honor of his decades-long work to revitalize cultural fire practices and forge enduring partnerships among tribes, agencies, and communities for land, water, and cultural healing.*

#### **Tony A. (naschio) Johnson, Chinook Indian Nation**

Chairman of the Chinook Indian Nation Tribal Council and Culture Committee

Senior Program Officer at Inatai Foundation

*In recognition of his leadership of the Chinook Indian Nation in its pursuit of federal recognition and his tireless work to revitalize the cultures and languages of tribes of the Lower Columbia River region.*

#### **Robert Kentta, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians**

Tribal Council Member and former Cultural Resources Director for his tribe

*In honor of his lifelong dedication to cultural preservation, tribal governance, and advocacy on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.*

### **Group Leader**

#### **Tribal Marine Stewards Network**

*In recognition of the Network's groundbreaking work to elevate tribal governance along California's Pacific coast through stewardship, monitoring, and co-management and for building an innovative, collaborative, and growing alliance.*

###

#### **About the Indigenous Leadership Awards**

The Indigenous Leadership Awards are a celebration of the determination, wisdom, and continuum of Indigenous leadership across our region. Since its founding in 2001, more than 80 exceptional Indigenous leaders have been recognized. These individuals are some of the most distinguished community leaders in the Pacific Northwest, representing a diverse spectrum of Indigenous cultures, languages, communities, and professions. They are negotiators, culture bearers, environmentalists, educators, advocates, scientists, knowledge holders, linguists, farmers, artists, resistors, and catalysts for change. All are united in their drive to protect and uplift tribal communities. For more information about the Indigenous Leadership Awards and past recipients, visit [ecotrust.org/indigenous-leadership-awards](https://ecotrust.org/indigenous-leadership-awards).

#### **About Ecotrust**

At Ecotrust, we work in partnership toward the vision of a more just, prosperous, and climate-smart future. With more than 30 projects from California to Alaska, our approach focuses on impact at the intersections of equity, the economy, and the environment in pursuit of radical, practical change. We welcome you to join us. Learn more at [ecotrust.org](https://ecotrust.org).