

Iroquois Speak Out for Mother Earth

A Part of VisionTV's Outlook Canada documentary series, premieres Saturday, March 30 at 9 p.m. E.T.

"First there was the Mohawk Wisdom Keepers, now, The Iroquois Speak Out For Mother Earth. You have to thank Danny Beaton for seeing the value of recording our elders. They are straight forward, and simple about what they believe the problems, and possible solutions to our everyday lives, might be. Take care of each other, look for positive role models, find the relationship with that essence of you, which is part of nature."

Paul DeMain,
Editor of News From Indian Country
"We are guardians of the Earth all our lives - for the generations that are coming."
Iroquois Elder Audrey Shenandoah



L-R: Oren Lyons, Danny Beaton, Alicja and Rigel Rozanska, and John Mohawk enjoy some of Mother Earth's bounty.
Photo courtesy of Danny Beaton

Can the ways of Aboriginal peoples help to teach our society a new respect for nature? The slow and relentless destruction of this planet's environment is perhaps the greatest tragedy in human history. In *The Iroquois Speak Out For Mother Earth*, a documentary airing in March on VisionTV, Native Elders voice their concerns about the fate of the natural world, and discuss the ways in which we might begin to undo the global problems caused by water, air and land pollution.

The hour-long film, part of VisionTV's Outlook Canada documentary series, makes its world premiere on Saturday, March 30 at 9 p.m. ET. Produced and directed by Native activist and filmmaker Danny Beaton, it

records the words of four Iroquois Elders from the U.S. gathered at the Six Nations Reservation in Ontario.

Born and raised in Ottawa, Beaton is part of the Mohawk Nation Turtle Clan. He has been making films for more than 12 years, using a deliberately simple and unadorned style to document the teachings of First Nations Elders.

Among the Elders featured in *The Iroquois Speak Out For Mother Earth* is Clayton Logan, Ceremonial Leader of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, based in

Newtown Cattaraugus Territory in New York state. He laments the befouling of the swift-running streams where he used to fish as a child, and warns of humankind's growing sense of disconnection from nature. Our abuse of the environment is no less a crime of murder, he contends. And all of us are suffering for the crime.

John Mohawk, an Elder of the Turtle Clan, from the Pinewood Community in Cattaraugus Territory, argues that Western culture has sought to impose human will upon the natural world. The result has been global climate change - a phenomenon that throws our future as a species into question. But indigenous cultures understand that we are nature's subjects, not its masters. If we

are to survive, Mohawk says, we must learn to become true "citizens of the natural world" once again.

The film also features Audrey Shenandoah, a Clan Mother of the Eel Clan, and Faith Keeper Oren Lyons, both members of the Onondaga Nation.

In his review of Iroquois Speak Out For Mother Earth, gkisedtanamook of Burnt Church, New Brunswick says, "Audrey Shenandoah and Clayton Logan offer the valuable and timeless reminder that what we do as human beings to one another and to the earth seriously impacts all aspects of life for all the living. We are related to Creation and must respect all Life. Every being and every place is Sacred. Being mindful of our children, grandchildren and the Unborn Generations will enable us, and them, to continue life. To pollute the earth is to pollute ourselves. When there is no more Balance of Life, we are no more."

Danny Beaton, the film's producer says, "It's common knowledge, if you poison the air, you have to breathe it; if you pollute the water, you have to drink that water. It's all that simple. Indigenous people have good ways of articulating their relationship to the Earth and have good ways of articulating how to behave on the Mother Earth. I wanted to reach a lot of people and share the concern of our spiritual leaders."

This film is a timely message for all people to carefully consider our present societal dilemmas and our natural responsibilities for the Earth and the Unborn Generations.

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