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Indian Country 101 - A Learning Opportunity for the Rest of Us

Jennifer Whitener Ulrich, Corporate Operations Officer, The Whitener Group

Jon Hoekstra, Executive Director, Greenway Trust

Jessie Israel, Conservation Collaboration + Indigenous Right Relations, The Nature Conservancy

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Indian Country 101 - A Learning Opportunity for the Rest of Us

Indian Country 101 is a free, online, self-paced tribal engagement training series developed by The Whitener Group, a Native-owned consultant group, and The Nature Conservancy (Washington State) launched during February 2023. This innovative tool was created as a way to learn more about the history of Native Nations in the U.S. and how to effectively engage and support Tribes in conservation work. The development of the Indian Country (IC) tribal engagement series was grounded in the understanding that you can't work with Indigenous people in the United States without first outlining the long and complicated history of tribes and tribal governments. Join Jennifer Whitener Ulrich, Jon Hoekstra, and Jessie Israel as they share more about this program, and how we can all become more sensitive and responsible non-Native partners and program managers as we work with Native sovereign nations throughout the U.S.



Jennifer Whitener Ulrich
Corporate Operations Officer
The Whitener Group

As a co-owner of The Whitener Group, Jenn serves as COO of The Whitener Group and provides strategic facilitation and economic development support for tribes and tribal enterprises.

As the former Business Development Director for Island Enterprises (IEI), the economic development corporation for Squaxin Island Tribe, Jennifer was in charge of marketing and advertising for IEI's eight diverse businesses. She was also responsible for researching, writing, and implementing business plans for many of the tribally owned corporations. Jennifer holds an MBA in Sustainable Business from Pinchot University.

Jenn's expertise lies in economic development, strategic planning, nonprofit organizational development, entrepreneurial systems, marketing, and financial analysis.

When not in the office (which isn't as often as it should be!) you will find Jenn spending time with her two daughters, beading on her loom (AKA learning the next hobby that has caught her fancy this month) or scouring thrift stores for lost treasures. You might also notice a countdown in her zoom background because she is forever waiting for November 1 when she is finally allowed to turn on her Christmas music.



Jon Hoekstra
Executive Director
Greenway Trust

Jon leads the Greenway as Executive Director, working with the Board of Directors, staff, and partners to collaboratively conserve the Mountains to Sound Greenway landscape. Jon brings to the Greenway a unique blend of scientific understanding, strategic problem solving and communication skills. Before joining the Greenway Trust, he served as Chief Scientist for the World Wildlife Fund, and led a variety of strategy and conservation initiatives at The Nature Conservancy. While Jon enjoys traveling around the world to explore wild places, he always loves coming back home to Seattle and the Greenway landscape that he and his wife have called home for 20 years.



Jessie Israel
Conservation Collaboration + Indigenous Right Relations
The Nature Conservancy

Jessie Israel is Conservation Collaboration + Indigenous Right Relations, The Nature Conservancy. A fourth-generation Seattleite, Jessie has spent more than a decade working with King County, where she has led teams whose work represents the future of how organizations can best serve the needs of people and the environment in urban areas.

As a public servant, consultant and non-profit leader, Jessie has a twenty-year track record of bringing together groups to invest in local community development, environmental and equity issues. She has trained around the world on building public-private partnerships & developing sustainable communities.

She has a long history of community service and has served on the boards of the GreatCity, Ballard Food Bank, CityYear and Women’s Political Caucus. Jessie spent more than two years as a volunteer with the United States Peace Corps in rural Guinea, West Africa and has a BA in Political Science from Seattle University.

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