

# Adaptations Future Conference testimonial

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For me, working in climate change is a part of my responsibility to both the Land, and to the generations coming after me. Gitxsan people have lived in relationship with the Land since time immemorial. When I was growing up, a part of how I felt connected to my community and my culture was when we would traditionally harvest salmon with my family on our territory. As I got older, I noticed fewer and fewer salmon returning every year. Since salmon are such a large part of our culture, losing the salmon would mean that it would fundamentally alter the way we are able to live and be, as Gitxsan people.

Indigenous people are the original scientists. All of our teachings are founded on the idea of having a responsibility to the Land, and on how to live sustainably. As I learn more about my Gitxsan culture, the more I am able to clearly see how important the principles of balance, respect, and harmony are for climate science and climate policy. The more I learn about climate policy, the more I notice how important it is to have Indigenous People at the table, with their lived knowledge and experiences of being interconnected to their lands and territories. The world as we know it is an interdependent, social-ecological system, and in order to truly address climate change, we need to get back to the fundamental teachings of our ancestors – teachings of balance and respect. My work today aims to highlight those principles, and seeks to decolonize climate policy and integrate as much of myself and my culture as I can. I am proud to be a Gitxsan and Cree-Métis climate scientist, and know that by choosing to work in these difficult spaces, I can help to do my part for the generations coming after me.

JANNA WALE

