

Pacific Yearly Meeting

Indigenous Concerns Sub-Committee

Report to Annual Session (AS) 2023

Submitted by Leslie Zondervan-Droz, Clerk, and members Barbara Babin, Genna Kules, Tom Rothschild, and Lisa Hubbell.

The Indigenous Concerns Subcommittee under the care of the Ministry Committee has met at least monthly since our report in July 2022.

Doctrine of Discovery learning sessions. In the fall of 2022, we were led to research, study and develop a program on the Doctrine of Discovery, which has formed the basis for all “Indian Law” in the U.S., as well as for all legal title to land, since the first arrivals of European settlers—something most, if not nearly all, non-Indigenous people living here have little or no knowledge or understanding of. In February, March, and April of 2023 we offered a two-session program on the Doctrine of Discovery and how as individuals and monthly meetings we might help dismantle that doctrine. In each month the first session included showing the film, “The Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code” by Indian Law expert Steven T. Newcomb (Shawnee/Lenape), followed by a short time for sharing our thoughts and feelings about the content. The second session in each month focused on actions and activities based on responses of attendees and guided by two members of our subcommittee. Enough interest was shown for these sessions that the subcommittee offers to lead additional sessions in the fall of 2023 or support any monthly meeting or committee wishing to hold their own learning sessions on the subject. Some Meetings have already begun this.

Annual Session Interest Group. The spring of 2023 was spent evaluating the efforts on the Doctrine of Discovery and planning for the Annual Session interest group. We wanted to make the most of the Annual Session location at Mount Madonna and engage local Indigenous people to further our learning about their history and values. Our hope is that monthly meetings will do the same in their own locations.

We were fortunate through one of our members to be able to contact a local Indigenous person, Kanyon Sayers-Roods, who is experienced in leading programs pertaining to relationships with neighbors on the land. She has spoken widely on Ohlone history, language, and culture, and offers a conversation about acknowledging our colonial past and the land we share, and strategizing a sustainable, healthy future. The title of the interest group is “Honor the Past, Shape the Future”.

In addition to the interest group, Kanyon will be meeting with both JYM and Young Adult Friends.