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A place to belong: creating an urban, Indian, women-led land trust in the San Francisco Bay Area

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ABSTRACT. When grounded in Indigenous epistemologies, land trust structures provide an effective, inclusive vehicle to enact community and landscape care in the face of colonial disruptions. The Sogorea Te' Land Trust in Lisjan (Ohlone) homelands in the San Francisco East Bay Area is the first Indigenous, women-led, urban land trust in the world. Two Indigenous women active in the Bay Area Indigenous community saw multiple community needs that coalesced around a lack of land. Without land, there is no place for grounded spiritual practice, cultivation and processing of foods and medicine, and recognition of the First Peoples of the San Francisco East Bay area. Without land, ongoing colonial relations perpetuate exclusion of Indigenous peoples and desecration of their sacred places. We explore the development, framing, application, and expansion of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust as a vehicle for rematriating land and creating community in a diverse and dense urban Indigenous space. Through the Sogorea Te' Land Trust, the potential, goals, and possibilities of land trusts are reimaged beyond conservation to inclusive eco-cultural-community restoration and well-being.

Key Words: *Indigenous; land trust; resilience; urban; women*

INTRODUCTION

Well, you know, when I look at the Bay Area, it's always home. So I'm blessed to wake up home. And when I say home, that means I was originally planted there. My ancestors have been there since the beginning of time... So that's a blessing. But it's a double-edged sword ... driving down the street and seeing bulldozers pulling up the street, and not knowing if my ancestors are going to be there as well, and having to deal with that, and knowing that of all the 425+ shellmounds, burial sites of my ancestors, have mostly been destroyed because of development. [Corrina Gould, 22 October 2013]

When Corrina Gould (Chochenyo Ohlone) and Johnella LaRose (Shoshone-Bannock) started Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC) 25 years ago, they were going door to door and figuring out ways to help Native people access basic resources like food, electricity, and shelter. They both worked at the American Indian Family Healing Center and, as services were being reduced by various Indian organizations and agencies, Johnella and other women in the community began doing house calls to learn about and respond to people's concerns. What they learned from the East Bay Indian community led them to their present work to develop the first urban, Native, women-led land trust.

Tribes and Native nonprofits around the nation, particularly in California, are developing Native land trusts and using conservation easements to protect, access, and steward culturally important lands. Land trusts are non-profit organizations with conservation as their principal purpose. They may purchase land or receive land donations (and the donor may receive a tax deduction), and they may hold conservation easements to prevent development on land owned by other parties. Conservation easements are a restriction on title that prevents development and may enable certain other uses (such as traditional stewardship, limited recreation, and restoration). There are at least ten Native land trusts nationally and numerous examples of tribes using conservation easements to protect culturally important places.

The movement has been particularly important in California, where many tribes do not have title to ancestral lands in part because of the non-ratification of treaties negotiated between tribes and the federal government 1851–1852. Although Native land trusts are beginning to thrive, there is little specific discussion in the land trust movement of the role of Native women or the importance of urban Native land trusts.

METHODS

This article focuses on and honors the work of Corrina Gould and Johnella LaRose to develop an urban, Native, women-led conservation mechanism to build community and protect sacred places. It emerges from an ongoing dialogue initiated by Corrina and Johnella with five other women (representing Mohawk, Anishinaabe, Lenape, Afro-Caribbean, Jewish, and other heritages) working in Native governance, law, and conservation. These five women (who, along with Gould and LaRose, are co-authors of this article) are San Francisco State University professor and chair of American Indian Studies Joanne Barker (Lenape), whose books include *Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-determination* (2005) and *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (2011); Arizona State University professor of Indigenous Sustainability Melissa K. Nelson (Anishinaabe), president of The Cultural Conservancy and editor/contributor to *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* (2008) and *Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Learning from Indigenous Practices for Environmental Sustainability* (2018); Indian law attorney Darcie Houck (Mohawk, Ottawa); University of California, Davis professor of Native American Studies Beth Rose Middleton, author of *Trust in the Land: New Directions in Tribal Conservation*; and independent filmmaker Michelle Grace Steinberg, who has made two films on Corrina's work, *Buried Voices* (2012) and *Beyond Recognition* (2014). We convened initially at the California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) office in Oakland, hosted by CIEA director, Sherri Norris (Osage). We share an interest in Native women's participation and

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leadership in Native land trusts and decolonial land stewardship rooted in Indigenous values. Together, we generated ideas and strategies to support what began as IPOC's land trust project and grew into the internationally recognized Sogorea Te' Land Trust. Our work together is also discussed in *Beyond Recognition* (2014), which focuses on the project and has been shown on Public Broadcasting Service television stations and in regional and national film festivals. Our conversations on the potentials and challenges of an urban Native land trust examined how Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work to rematriate the land, uplift urban Indigenous women, and build de-colonial community may reframe the land trust movement.

HOMELAND CONTEXT

I think what you both are trying to do here as Native women of the East Bay and traditional ancestral caretakers of this land is to create a really new type of land trust. [Melissa Nelson, 1 March 2014]

The history of Indigenous peoples in the San Francisco Bay Area (hereafter the Bay Area) is one of violent, overlapping periods of attempted genocide and colonization. Beginning with the Spanish Mission system (1769–1821), through the Mexican land grant period (1821–1848), the Gold Rush (1849–1851), California statehood (1850), and the non-ratification of treaties with California tribes (1851–1852), there was an active state-sanctioned commitment to the extermination of all Indians, our lifeways, and political structures (Forbes 1969, Heizer and Almquist 1977, Heizer 1993, Trafzer and Hyer 1999, Johnston-Dodds 2002, Lindsay 2012).

When the Spaniards first arrived on the California coast in 1542 and “claimed” it, unbeknownst to the Indigenous peoples of California, there were at least 55 distinct Native nations in the Bay Area (Milliken 1991). The first Spanish settlements in 1776 (Missions San Francisco and Santa Clara) led to disease, destruction of and enclosure of food procurement areas, and outright violence, causing a massive Native population decline of perhaps of 80% or more by the late 1880s (Forbes 1969, Heizer and Almquist 1977; King 1994, Leventhal et al. 1994, Goldberg and Champagne 1996). The non-ratification of treaties negotiated with California Indians from 1851–1852 and the formal end of treaty making in 1871 ensured that the majority of California Indians were pushed off at least part of their homelands and left vulnerable to the horrific depredations of state-authorized white vigilantes. When funds were set aside in the early 20th century for the purchase of rancherias or small parcels of land for “homeless California Indians,” these parcels were typically lower-value lands outside of white settlements. They were not established in places that had already become urban centers with valuable land bases, such as San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley. In addition, the “expert” opinions of Kroeber and other anthropologists (Castillo 1994, Leventhal et al. 1994) that Bay Area Indigenous peoples were “extinct” silenced any examination of the need for Native land bases and/or the recognition of Native populations in the Bay Area.

Today, the San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley Metropolitan Area, called the Bay Area, has one of the highest urban Indian populations in the nation—over 65,000 American Indian/Alaska Native residents, according to 2020 Census data (U.S. Census Bureau 2020). This is because of both the survival of California Indian people and the large number of Native Americans who

signed up for the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Indian Relocation Program (1952–1973) and moved to the Bay Area in search of work opportunities (Lobo 2002, Ramirez 2007). Despite the high population of Indian peoples in the region, because of the history described above, there are no federally recognized tribes in the Bay Area. The legal options to protect traditional places are severely limited for federally unrecognized tribes. Commercial, municipal, and industrial development in the greater Bay Area continues to result in displacement, just as it did in the early 19th century. As Corrina Gould (28 November 2013) explains, “There has been no slowdown in development, and no developers coming forward to work together to protect sites.” IPOC responds to these challenges by reclaiming traditional places and affirming cultural survival against persistent odds. Sogorea Te' Land Trust (STLT) emerged from IPOC, which still exists simultaneously alongside STLT, and focuses on acquiring sites for restoration, stewardship, ceremony, and resilience.

Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC)

In the fashion of a grassroots, community, urban Indian organization, IPOC responds to issues raised in the urban Indian community—including local Lisjan (Ohlone) issues, California Indian issues, and Indian country-wide concerns. IPOC worked to address Native homelessness in Oakland, supported the Makah Tribe's struggle to continue traditional whaling in the Pacific Northwest, advocated for the development of the American Indian public charter school, and supported the survival of the Intertribal Friendship House. As people became aware of their work and commitments, IPOC began to get calls about Native burials being disturbed during construction. “It was the ancestors that started appearing,” said Corrina (28 November 2013), describing how IPOC became increasingly focused on site protection.

One of the key issues in Bay Area site protection is the shellmounds, ancient pyramid-like structures of shells that served as both burials and monuments (Hedgecock 2006, Sheynin 2015). Corrina (28 November 2013) likens the shellmounds to sites like Stonehenge in Scotland, “spiritual places, points of reference” for coastal Native communities. When the development of the large shellmound at Emeryville became imminent in 2001, Corrina, Johnella, and others went on the site and protested. They continue to do so on major shopping days like the day after Thanksgiving. They began shellmound peace walks in 2005 in collaboration with Buddhist monks and nuns who walked with American Indians during the 1978 Longest Walk.

The monks and nuns of the Nipponzan Myohoji order began working with American Indians following the teachings of Nichidatsu Fujii, who survived the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. Fujii believed that American peace was connected to world peace because American policies and practices had the power to influence world peace. He believed that America could not be at peace until it resolved its troubled relations with American Indians in particular. He saw the connection between the devastation caused by the atomic bomb in Japan and the devastation caused in the Navajo/Dine homelands where the uranium used to make the bomb was made. Because of the colonial history within the United States, Fujii believed that American Indians needed support, and he sent Buddhist monks and nuns to offer prayer and service in Indian Country. As LaRose (25 May 2022) explained, “The relationship between this Japanese

Buddhist sect and the American Indian Movement was a spiritual connection which also included the work for non-violent civil disobedience along with deep prayer and sacrifice to support the American Indian Movement.” The monks and nuns came to the Oakland American Indian Movement (AIM) house in the late 1970s. The first person to arrive was nun Jun Yasuda who has crossed the country on peace walks with American Indians five times (Dunlap 2003; Grafton Peace Pagoda, <http://www.graftonpeacepagoda.org/>). Part of the Nipponan Myohoji practice is walking and chanting for peace. “Every walk we’ve ever had the Buddhists have been with us,” LaRose recalled (26 September 2014).

The walks are a broad call to the public to walk between each of 425 shellmounds in the Bay Area, witnessing the desecration of the mounds and offering prayers. Although walks for peace and justice have a prominent history throughout the mid-twentieth century Civil Rights movement and anti-colonial non-violent resistance around the world, the specific inspiration for the shellmound walks came from Johnella’s experience on a walk at Ground Zero in New York City after 11 September 2001. After she returned and continued coalition work on site protection in the Bay Area, it came to her to help organize a walk.

We wanted to go around and just say a prayer. We weren’t really quite sure what we were doing. We did this walk—I think it was 22 days, but 19 days of walking and we just went to these shellmounds. Some of them of course are covered up with buildings.... We went, and we said prayers. We really felt like we had a responsibility ... we knew that we had to start somewhere. [Johnella La Rose, 28 November 2013]

With five shellmound walks to date and numerous actions around the Bay Area to respond to or prevent desecration of traditional places, IPOC’s work increasingly began to focus on site protection and on fostering a community connection to land.

Indian People Organizing for Change was never intentionally created to do work around the shellmounds or to do work around Ohlone issues. What happened as a result of the work we were doing in the Indian community was that these things came up. I really believe in my heart that the ancestors said, “It’s time.” They chose us to do this work as a part of Indian People Organizing for Change. [Corrina Gould, 28 November 2013]

One of IPOC’s longtime partners in site protection work, Wounded Knee DeOcampo (Miwok), had worked for over a decade to raise awareness to protect a traditional burial ground currently owned by the City of Vallejo, Sogorea Te’, or Glen Cove (SS&PRT, n.d.). Wounded Knee collected signatures, organized Indian people and allies to attend meetings, and monitored the proposals to develop Sogorea Te’ into a recreational site. When IPOC learned that the City of Vallejo’s Parks and Recreation District was planning to bulldoze Sogorea Te’ in April 2011, they took over the land and held the site for 109 days. A sacred fire lit by Fred Short (Ojibwe), the spiritual adviser for the American Indian Movement of Northern California, became the center of a broad and diverse community that sensed the importance of protecting the traditional place.

The focus on building peace carried over from the walks to Sogorea Te’. In this context, the practice of peace specifically included exercising nonviolent behavior, even in the face of police presence. At the spiritual encampment, participants were required to be nonviolent and drug free, and leaders clearly enforced these parameters. The safety of everyone—including small children—at the site was at risk if any inappropriate behavior took place. As such, the land taught people how to carry themselves and to interact with one another.

We took the American aggression out, we let go of colonialism. The land teaches you how to behave.... What does peace mean? Taking it back to the way the land might have been treated, and taken care of. [Johnella LaRose, 26 September 2014]

At Sogorea Te’ ... we built a community there. This land was the cure to a lot of problems that we were having in our community. I think we need that space, that open space. It’s not just for Indian people it’s for everybody. [Johnella LaRose, 28 November 2013]

IPOC’s takeover of Sogorea Te’ predated the popular Occupy movement by about two years. The Occupy movement called attention to the divisions between a small ruling class (the 1% or Wall Street and the rest of the population or the 99%) and called for the masses to occupy—physically inhabit—places that were deemed public but were still subject to exclusion (e.g., parks, universities) or that were closed off to them (e.g., corporate headquarters; Juris 2012). Although IPOC supporters created an encampment at Sogorea Te’ to stop the construction on the sacred site, their takeover was distinctly different from Occupy because of its spiritual center.

We base the work that we are doing around spirituality, around having ceremony, around our original teaching. We were all praying all the time. I really believe that the ancestors heard those prayers. It was a sacred site, it was a fire that was lit, it was around spirituality, and it was what kept us together and kept us safe. [Corrina Gould, 28 November 2013]

People from diverse communities, many of whom were familiar with IPOC’s work to protect the shellmounds and other Bay Area sacred sites, came to support the struggle at Sogorea Te’. Spiritual leaders from different parts of California and elsewhere, including the South Pacific, offered songs and dances. According to Corrina and Johnella, the work at Sogorea Te’ became increasingly important because it offered a place for people to develop a spiritual community on the land in which everyone had a place.

Indigenous people can come together around those thoughts and ideas and hold land down ... if you are Native or non-Native, you walked onto that land, you had community there, you belonged some place, that is what really resonated with people, they were human beings again. [Corrina Gould, 28 November 2013]

As such, the land cared for people, and people cared for the land. An ethic of care guided collective action for land protection. For the first time in many of the participants’ lives, they had a safe place to be, with one another and the land, in an urban space.

RESULTS: DEVELOPING A VISION FOR LAND AND COMMUNITY

The IPOC land trust vision applied the tools of a land trust and conservation easements (a protective covenant that prevents development for a designated period) to enable local Indigenous peoples to steward tracts of their land in a traditional manner. Native land trusts facilitate both the transfer of land back to Native peoples and generate opportunities for creating cultural easements. These easements allow Native people to access and protect their sacred places.

After the encampment ended at Sogorea Te', Corrina was invited to a meeting of Native land trusts, and, in consultation with Johnella and community members, advisers, and colleagues following the meeting, the idea for an urban, Indigenous, women-led land trust was born.

Indigenous land trusts are really about reengaging people back into the land, really touching the land and really working with the land and bringing medicines and ceremony ... back. And not only Indigenous people, but really trying to bring everybody along with us. (Corrina Gould 2022 podcast, <https://forthewild.world/listen/corrina-gould-on-settler-responsibility-and-reciprocity-encore-277>)

IPOC held a series of community meetings in the urban Native community and broader dialogues with women in conservation and Native land trusts to solidify the design and goals of this unprecedented urban, Native, women-led land trust.

[It's] really facilitated by our ancestors because we're doing the work and they believe that we can do it ... that's how we really approach the work, that we really have the faith to do the things that they want us to do.... And now I'm hoping that these conversations ... will help us to really facilitate how that's going to look... with this group of women and another group of women ... and then a whole community to envision this and to dream this out with us. And I think that that's what's really important, that we have to be in this state of mind where we're able to dream outside of the parameters that we've been given. And that it's an important that it's a dream that encompasses a lot of people's ideas. [Corrina Gould, 1 March, 2014]

With seed funding from a local foundation, IPOC transitioned from an entirely volunteer-run grassroots entity to an organization that can support the work of its founders and increase its scope. As IPOC continues to organize campaigns around sacred site protection, they are also conducting research on obtaining land and creating outreach materials to broaden the involvement of local Native peoples and build solidarity among people of other backgrounds. STLT has now grown into its own distinct 501(c)(3) organization (i.e., tax exempt) focused on rematriation of land, stewardship, and mutual resilience in the face of climatic and political-economic change.

Gould and IPOC partners envisioned the land trust as serving as a cultural conservation entity in the Bay Area that could also hold land for the return, or repatriation, of ancestral remains unearthed in projects throughout the region. An Indigenous land trust could recreate a shellmound where ancestors could be

reinterred in a traditional fashion. Some of these ancestors are ones who continue to appear as development increases, and others have been held for years for research at the University of California, Berkeley and other institutions. Currently, all the federally unrecognized Indian peoples of the Bay Area have “no land to take [the ancestors] home to.... We pray to have remains returned to us, and to be able to recreate a shellmound to share what our monuments look like, and to put our ancestors back to rest in the land.” [Corrina Gould, 9 February 2014]

IPOC and Sogorea Te' Land Trust support the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and its mandates to repatriate ancestral remains, associated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to federally recognized tribes. The practice of repatriation, returning something to the father, is known around the world and is recognized by settler colonial nation-states. Sogorea Te' Land Trust is asserting a new type of return, a rematriation, that resists patriarchal settler colonialism and control of land. Rematriation “can undermine the patriarchal paradigm of capitalistic landownership and possession” (Wires and LaRose 2019:33). Rematriation is about return of homelands, waters, and relations, as well as ancestors and sacred items. Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work resonates with Ts'msyen scholar Dr. Robin R. Gray's (2022:5) description of rematriation, as follows:

Rematriation, as an embodied praxis of recovery and return, is about revitalizing the relationship between Indigenous lands, heritage, and bodies based on Indigenous values and ways of knowing, being, and doing.... As a socio-political mode of resurgence and refusal, rematriation redirects our energy, attention, activism, and resources toward sustaining, nurturing, managing, protecting, healing, adapting, renewing, creating, and generating our relationality with all of creation and within and between our families, communities, and nations.

Rematriation encourages a return of land and associated relatives to women's leadership, care, and stewardship. As a beautiful hand-painted sign at the Village of Lisjan reminds us, “To Rematriate is to Restore a People to their Rightful Place in Sacred Relationship with their Ancestral Lands.”

Both Sogorea Te' Land Trust and IPOC work to increase opportunities for Native people to influence and guide local land management, with a particular focus on bringing young people and women into the process. Whereas IPOC focuses on organizing and direct action, its sister organization, Sogorea Te' Land Trust, does land acquisition and land stewardship. With support from the Shuumi Land Tax, grants, and donations, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust now employs over fifteen staff, largely land team members and youth program leaders. Activities at the different garden sites foreground opportunities for youth, with a goal to motivate youth to pursue formal education in fields including land management, language, anthropology/archaeology, and botany, which they could then apply to the work of the organizations. Youth also participated in the creation of web content to support both IPOC and the film project, *Beyond Recognition*. Another film, *Buried Voices* (2012), by the same director (co-author Michelle Grace Steinberg) documented efforts to protect a sacred site from recreational development by a regional park. These

educational, hands-on projects all contribute to fostering creative strategies—including the application of land trust structures and conservation easement tools—to address the legacies of colonization in the Bay Area.

Mitigating development: consultation requirements and realities

Government agencies and private developers consistently desecrate areas sacred to Native peoples. In this process, hundreds of burials have been disturbed and university basements and storage rooms are filled with ancestors of the Ohlone people. Although repatriation to non-federally recognized tribes is possible under CalNAGPRA, the process remains slow, and the repatriation may not be complete.

Federally recognized tribes have clear status as recognized governmental entities for purposes of government-to-government consultation regarding development on culturally important places. In many cases, state and local agencies are required to consult with federally recognized tribes. Requirements for consultation with non-federally recognized tribes are not so clear under the law, and such consultation is often considered discretionary. For example, for projects under federal jurisdiction there is no requirement to consult with non-federally recognized tribes. For projects under state jurisdiction, California state law acknowledges certain non-federally recognized tribes for certain purposes but does not provide the same legal standing that federally recognized tribes have under state law. As Corrina reflects, this means that non-federally recognized tribes are continually asserting their own existence.

You know, the United States government, all along the coastline has not recognized people. When you are a recognized tribe, you are entitled to land. You are entitled to housing. You are entitled to education and medical. So, as unrecognized people in our own land, we do not get any of those things. It's really difficult to be thought of as in the past and still know that you're here. I think that's the difficulty of being a non-federally recognized tribe, is always having to put your voice out there and say, "We are still here. We have not gone anywhere." [Corrina Gould, 12 July 2013]

The result of having no tribe that is mandated to be at the table for consultation and no requirement to protect sites once identified during consultation is the mass unearthing of graves, desecration of sites, and disregard for cultural places. If consultation were required, federally unrecognized tribal members could inform developers where not to build and/or excavate to avoid disturbing burials or cultural places. If actions to protect places were required once impacts were identified, tribal members could ensure that the cultural information they shared would result in culturally appropriate development.

I think, one of the hardest things is that ... I guess when I was growing up, I always knew that I was Ohlone. I always knew that I was Indian. I always knew where we were enslaved. Federal recognition never crossed my mind. It's because I knew who I was, and I didn't need to prove that to anybody. It wasn't until I began to really deepen, going into the work about the ancestors, that this whole recognition piece came up. But that's not my life

work. My life work is not to get that recognition. My life work is to recognize those ancestors, so that they could recognize the work that we're doing, so that the healing can begin here. [Corrina Gould, 22 October 2013]

California has several laws and processes that appear to promote protection of cultural resources and Native American traditional properties. However, the laws often are procedural rather than substantive and often require significant time and money to fully participate in consultation and review. The decision makers are typically non-Native, and Native peoples are almost always put at a disadvantage in this foreign legal system. Senate Bill 18 (SB 18, Traditional Tribal Cultural Places) may be the most helpful statute in non-federally recognized tribal efforts to establish a Native land trust because it authorizes non-federally recognized tribes to acquire and hold conservation easements under state law (California Civil Code § 815.3). The nonprofit conservation organization structure provides a critical mechanism for California Natives in the Bay Area to have a seat at the table in pursuit of securing protection of resources, traditional cultural properties, sacred sites, and sacred burial sites.

DISCUSSION: THE LAND TRUST MOVEMENT THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES

IPOC' and now Sogorea Te' Land Trust's vision extends the importance and applicability of land trusts and other private conservation tools to urban settings. Land trusts may be an increasingly important tool for federally unrecognized tribes working to acquire land or rights to access lands.

[For] unrecognized tribes ... your only option for having a relationship with land is private property or access agreements, perhaps, with state or federal land ... but the whole concept of a tribal land base is not an option for you because you can't be recognized, and you can't get tribal trust lands. So, a land trust enables you to own, to steward, to manage, to caretake some land base as a collective body ... that intergenerational aspect of it is so important ... [to have] an actual legal tool that has this "in perpetuity" language matches people's relationship to place over time and the way [they] want it to carry forth into future generations. [Melissa Nelson, 1 March 2014]

Land trusts have provided smallholders throughout the nation with the rights to continue to work land in an economy that does not support small-scale farmers or foresters. For example, the American Farmland Trust applies conservation mechanisms to help family farmers stay in business, and the Pacific Forest Trust develops working forest conservation easements to help owners of working forests continue sustainable harvest. Both organizations, however, like many in the land trust movement, are majority white-led, and the outcomes of their projects may continue to fence Indigenous peoples out of their homelands. A series of initiatives in large conservation groups, such as the Land Trust Alliance, have been working to address and integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (for context, Atencio et al. 2013) and to bring Native people and non-Native land trust staff together on the land to learn from one another and develop ways to collaborate (Oregon Land Justice Project, <https://www.oregonlandjustice.org/learning-journey.html>).

There are also Black and Indigenous-led land trusts, which generally center concepts of justice and repair in their missions and work. For example, the Black Family Land Trust protects African American land ownership in a context of land loss and unfulfilled land promises. The Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust is working to build communication, collaboration, and healing between African American and Indigenous peoples seeking redress for centuries of colonial harm and the opportunity to tend and steward land for ecological and community health. Sogorea Te' Land Trust also works to foster and steward connections between Indigenous people and People of Color for whom the East Bay is also home. As Corrina Gould (2022) explains,

We don't talk about the genocide of Indian people in this country, we don't talk about the genocide of African people and the taking of their language and their traditional belief systems and bringing them to a land that that they didn't know, and making them have to be enslaved. And so, we don't talk about those things because people, I think, are afraid to touch the pain. And I think that's what today is asking us to do, is to touch that pain to open it wide. And then from there, we have to heal, we have to bring it back to the repatriation of land. It's important that Indigenous people have access to their land, to be given back the land that was stolen from them, to acknowledge that this land, this new country, this very young country, has done horrific things and they owe both Indigenous people and African American people a huge debt. And so, unless we begin to talk about these conversations, unless we're very honest about it, we're not going to move forward.

Further, as Johnella explains, Native approaches to inclusive land stewardship are needed in the urban setting.

Yes, we want to grow food, but we also want to pray. We want to pray on this land. And we want to make sure that this land is here forever. I really just see like little plots of land everywhere all over the bay area, that [are] sacred space, that we treat as sacred space. Just like we do Sogorea Te'. Sacred space [where] people can just come and just be and just have their place to pray. Right now, we don't have that ... [and] what happens is it leaves this soul wound so deep that it affects us every day. [Johnella LaRose, 1 March 2014]

Sogorea Te' Land Trust's formation as a new kind of land trust brings entwined struggles for justice, recognition of Indigenous identity, and sustainability into conversation with reinvigorating traditions of women's leadership. This new organization directly counters neocolonial urbanization and genocidal policies that attempt to ignore Indigenous human rights (as outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; United Nations 2007) and traditional knowledge and practices. As LaRose explains,

As a woman and as a grandmother, I have a great stake in this. I'm leaving this to my grandchildren, and their grandchildren. So, I really feel like I have to do something, we have to leave something for these children. I think women, as mothers, as grandmothers, we have this

connection that's undeniable... [and] we have to use what the creator gave us ... to take good care of the land. But I also feel like it's a struggle, it's definitely a struggle with this land trust for women, I think we just really have to stay strong and know that we can do this job and do this project. [Johnella LaRose, 1 March 2014]

As such, the work to protect Sogorea Te' and other sites recognizes that "spiritual places still exist" in urban areas and works to connect people back to these places and to one another (NoiseCat 2021). Part of IPOC's vision for a land trust, now realized in Sogorea Te' Land Trust, was to be able to preserve land in an urban context where people can have that spiritual base. For California Indians in particular, according to Corrina, there is no roundhouse accessible for urban Indians in the Bay Area, "those things are missing in the city. A pocket of land where people could do that.... I would love to have my kids and grandkids in a roundhouse" (Corrina Gould, 2 September 2014). This is important for non-California Indians as well because many Native people came to the area on the Indian Relocation Program, and they don't have access to their places of prayer and power. Preserving Ohlone homelands and creating restored and ceremonial spaces offers a "way of going back to the land and feeding our spirituality, going back, and reconnecting ourselves as human beings, and figuring out how to live in a different kind of community" (Corrina Gould, 2 September 2014).

The work of Sogorea Te' Land Trust counters a current legal structure that protects extraction economies and is indifferent at best, if not outright hostile to, Native land histories, values, and responsibilities to ancestors, lands, and community. The STLT, as a women-led, Native, urban land trust, is creating a space for community revitalization, the protection of traditional places, and the recognition of California Indian survival in an urban context.

CONCLUSION: A THRIVING URBAN, INDIAN, WOMEN-LED LAND TRUST

Sogorea Te' Land Trust's growth and influence has been exponential since the idea for a land trust emerged in 2012. In 2015, IPOC received foundation funding to develop organizational infrastructure for the land trust and supplemented this with screenings of *Beyond Recognition* and presentations on their vision for an urban, Native, women-led land trust. IPOC convened the two advisory groups (including the community-based group of women leaders and the academic/legal group of women advisors) to assist with the articulation of the land trust's vision and mission in 2015–2017. With the support of an interim fiscal sponsor, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust received its first piece of land in 2018, the Lisjan site, from Planting Justice. In the following two years, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust filed articles of incorporation with the State of California and applied for tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. In 2019, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust was incorporated as a nonprofit conservation organization (a land trust) with tax exempt status. In addition to obtaining diverse grants, the organization and partners developed a successful fundraising strategy with the Shuumi Land Tax, which allows community members to pay a voluntary tax to First Peoples of the East Bay Area. With these funds, Sogorea Te' Land Trust leadership and staff are investing in food security projects and community-led restoration, all grounded in a spiritual center of Indigenous, place-based values.

As of 2022, STLT stewards and tends many different land sites in the East Bay, where they grow, harvest, and process traditional medicines, vegetables, and other Native foods and hold teaching circles to promote health and justice. Sogorea Te' Land Trust also has multiple partnerships with local jurisdictions, including the cities of Richmond, Oakland, and Alameda. One outcome of these partnerships is the renaming of parks with culturally affirming names, some in the Chochenyo Ohlone language. Sogorea Te' Land Trust has become a national and global leader asserting and modeling the importance of land rematriation (Urbanski 2020), urban justice, and food sovereignty (Wires and LaRose 2019).

Corrina, Johnella, and partners believe that the development of this innovative, community-based, urban, women-led, Native land trust can also be an inspiration to other Native peoples in urban areas to build community through land stewardship. As outlined in the Land Trust's founding documents, its purpose is "to protect and restore California Indian Peoples' cultural traditions, ancestral territories, means of subsistence and environmental health" (Articles 2018). Sogorea Te' Land Trust's work remains deeply integrated with broader movements for site protection, recognition of Indigenous epistemologies and histories, and community-based resilience. Although acclaimed as the first urban Indigenous women's land trust, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust's structure and activities are really an echo and reclamation of Indigenous' women's historic role of keeping the land and tending to our relations in ways that are just, compassionate, and inclusive. Sogorea Te' Land Trust centers care for human and non-human community in an urban space, re-recognizing it as Indigenous homeland. As Gould remembers, this work is rooted in place-based responsibility, identity, and commitment.

I really feel like, as an Ohlone woman, growing up, being born on our original land, that I have an obligation, that I was put here for a reason, and that those ancestors direct me to do this kind of work. [Corrina Gould, 12 July 2013]

Sogorea Te' Land Trust expands the vision of what a land trust can be. Far beyond an organization focused only on habitat protection, conservation, or recreation, the Sogorea Te' Land Trust embodies and enacts ethics of relationality and reciprocity between people and land and between and among diverse peoples beginning to recognize their responsibilities within Indigenous homelands (L. J. Popken, C. Griffen, C. Coté, and E. Angel, 2022, *unpublished manuscript*). The Sogorea Te' Land Trust shows us what is possible for a 21st century resilient and inclusive land trust to achieve, with, by, and for Indigenous peoples.

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