

## What's Next: Inhabitants: An Indigenous Perspective

To learn more about the film, visit <https://www.inhabitantsfilm.com/>

### Understanding Traditional Indigenous Land Management Practices:

- In the United States, almost all large-scale commercial farms use irrigation to water crops, accounting for over 42% of the Nation's total freshwater withdrawal ([USDA](#)). Compare this to traditional Hopi farming techniques that don't use any irrigation on land that receives less than 10 inches of rain annually.
- There was an 8-fold increase in high-severity wildfires in the western United States between 1985 and 2017 ([Parks et. al](#)). Controlled burns, a traditional Indigenous fire management practice once banned by the US Forest Service, are now some of the primary tools the Agency and Tribes are using to combat the growing threat of highly destructive wildfires.
- Between 1700 and 1886, the buffalo population in the United States decreased from 20-30 million to less than 300 thanks to mostly white, largely unregulated commercial hunters ([Sierra Club](#)). The bison were the primary source of protein, warmth, and cultural strength for the Blackfoot Confederacy and other tribes. Today, the Blackfeet are working to revive the buffalo population, while recognizing that the buffalo are some of the best adapters to climate change since they shed their coats regularly, require little water, and constantly migrate.
- The Menominee Reservation in northeastern Wisconsin is a prime example of sustainable forestry that is profitable but also ecologically sustainable. Following the guidance of a chief from the 1800's, the Menominee only harvest: "the mature trees, the sick trees and the trees that have fallen..." ([American Forests](#)). As a result, the Reservation is visible from space, since it's a patch of green in a sea of brown fields. The Menominee have received awards from the Rainforest Alliance and the Council on Sustainable Development for their forestry practices.

### How to Take Action in Our Community

It is imperative that our response to climate change is guided by indigenous perspectives. As the original stewards of this land, their knowledge is invaluable as we seek to conserve water, manage forest fires, and improve agricultural practices. There are many ways you can support these goals:

- Help support native land stewardship efforts in our area by advocating for indigenous people to be consulted before land management decisions are made.
- Visit the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose and learn about the oldest residents of Colorado and the techniques the Ute used to manage the land in Eagle County.
- Consider reading, [An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Jean Mendoza, and Debbie Reese; [Braiding Sweetgrass](#) by Robin Wall Kimmer; or [As Long as Grass Grows](#) by Dina Gilio-Whitaker to further your knowledge of indigenous land management practices (all available through the Eagle Valley Library District).
- **Project Drawdown:** Interested in learning more about Drawdown Solutions? Check out Project Drawdown's website: [drawdown.org](http://drawdown.org)