Bios of Panelists *(powerhouses, courageous, empathic, passionate)*

**Regina Lopez-Whiteskunk:**

Regina was born and raised in the Four Corners region and is a member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe of Towaoc ("Toyock"), Colorado. She is the mother of four children and grandmother of ten. At an early age, she advocated for land, air, water and animals. In 2013, Regina was elected to serve as a member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal leadership. She is a former Co-Chair for the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition and had the honor of speaking at Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth about her experiences on the journey to protect the Bears Ears region in southeastern Utah. She also served as the Education Director for the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose. As the great-granddaughter of one of the last medicine men of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Regina has traveled extensively sharing Ute culture through song, dance, lectures, and published writing, to benefit all people for a better tomorrow.

**Diedra Silbert:**

I am Diedra Silbert, a member of Great Old Broads for Wilderness which my sister directs nationally and who I proudly enjoy seeing in the film we’ll watch tonight! Getting out in the wilderness with my backpack on has been my go-to vacation and liberation from the stresses of daily life since I discovered my love for it right after college. As a kid, I became a wild horse or a storm dancer whenever I played outside—which was frequently. Many of you here know me as staff for the Town of Ridgway where my focus is bringing our community together in creative ways to help us all thrive.

I have the honor of moderating the panel discussion after the film, and I’d like you to meet the film’s writer and executive producer, Suez Jacobson, who will introduce the film.

**Suez Jacobson:**

Suez grew up in the shadow of the Wasatch Mountains and found her solace hiking and backpacking in the wilderness areas near Salt Lake City. Although she likes to say her aspiration was to be a ski bum, eventually she got a Ph.D. in economics and became a financial analyst and professor. But her heart was always in the wild, and she struggled to reconcile her head and her heart. It bothered her that commonly people forged the link between wilderness and economics by noting that people should support wilderness because it contributes to economic growth in nearby places. What she found obvious was that the pursuit of ever more economic growth would mean the end of wilderness. Her reconciliation came when she realized that wild places and the magic of awe in nature have the power to be the antidote to economic growth, the power to be the catalyst to think differently about the value of More.

**Robyn Cascade:**

Robyn’s awe and passion for the natural world began in her childhood as she watched barnacles filter feed and observed shifting sands and the behavior of horseshoe crabs and nesting terns on the Atlantic coast. She became a registered Maine Guide and co-led wilderness trip for survivors of sexual abuse. She taught for Outward Bound, Audubon Society and other environmental organizations, eventually becoming a licensed elementary teacher. Upon retirement in 2014, Robyn assumed leadership of the local Northern San Juan chapter of Great Old Broads for Wilderness and advocates for the public lands she cherishes. She is most present and alive in the wilderness when observing wildlife that doesn’t know she is there!

**Christi Strickland:**

Christi is the Co-Executive Director of the Wilderness Guides Council, a Facilitator for Radical Joy for Hard Times, and a former adjunct faculty member at Naropa University. Her teachings and passion have been around reconnecting people to themselves, the earth, and each other. One of her driving questions has been "what helps communities to thrive?" and she has recently started a program called CircleForth to support people and organizations to cultivate hope and exponential potential. Joanna Macy and Trebbe Johnson have been some of her most influential teachers.  She has faith in the power of the loving, broken-open human heart.