

Tribal Nations to Gather in the Berkshires to Honor Indigenous Peoples' Day

Great Barrington, Mass. (Sept. 5, 2022) – Fifteen tribal nations, including the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohicans, will join a celebration of Native American culture in South County on the weekend of Oct. 8-10.

The public is invited to join these immersive events:

- Saturday, Oct. 8, 7:30 p.m. *Honoring Native America* at the Mahaiwe PAC, Great Barrington [\$25, [link to details, tickets](#)]
- Sunday, Oct. 9, 7:30 p.m., Indigenous Voices Panel, Kripalu, Lenox [[link to details, registration](#)]
- Indigenous People's Day, Monday, Oct. 10, 11 a.m., *Ceremonial Walk*, 334 Main St., Great Barrington, [[details](#)]

Honoring Native America includes a virtual message from Carlos Nakai, the world's premier performer of the Native American flute; songs from the Stockbridge-Munsee Powwow Drum Family, GiiTaa'se Singers and Joan Henry; NAACP-Berkshires President, Dennis Powell, awarding Larry Spotted Crow Mann of Okheteau Cultural Center with the first-ever Indigenous Award; and keynote speeches from Rhonda Anderson, Western Massachusetts Commissioner on Indian Affairs; and Grandmother Margaret Behan from the Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers, with Chief Justice Emeritus Robert Yazzie and Cheryl Fairbanks, Esq. speaking about Indigenous PeaceMaking. [Click here for tickets \(\\$25\) - students get free tickets](#) because they are our future.

These events are informed by the first annual *Northeast Council for Indigenous Peoples' Day*, a convening of native leaders representing 15 First Nations at Kripalu over the weekend. The aim is to strengthen relationships between native and nonnative allies and encourage collaboration for our collective future. Although the council meeting is private, an *Indigenous Voices Panel* will be livestreamed from Kripalu, on Sunday night ([register here](#)), including Heather Bruegl, Kristine Hill, Chief Jake Singer, Aaron Athey, Shawn Stevens, and many more ([register here](#)).

“Change flows through relationships, at the speed of trust,” said event organizer, Lev Natan, executive director of Alliance for a Viable Future. “Ultimately, we are one human family. By building alliances we can transcend our differences, establish unity, and do what needs to be done to ensure a viable future for the children.”

The Oct. 10 Ceremonial Walk ([register here](#)) in Great Barrington begins at the Gazebo behind Town Hall at 11 a.m. with Gordon Williams and his Stockbridge-Munsee Powwow Drum Family, GiiTaa'se Singers, playing their powwow drum. The family is traveling here from their reservation in Wisconsin, invited by Shawn Stevens, a Munsee cultural educator.

Nearby towns have collaborated with Alliance for a Viable Future to offer local events as well. [Berkshire Community Action](#) is organizing an *Indigenous Peoples' Celebration* on The Common in Pittsfield on Sunday, Oct. 9 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. leading up to the weekend, [Basilica Hudson](#) will screen *Testimony of the Iroquois* (Haudenosaunee) on October 2 with discussion and Q&A.

The weekend's activities were inspired, in part, by Randy Weinstein and Gwendolyn VanSant of the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Committee, who, in 2019, asked the Town of Great Barrington to join a growing movement of towns, cities and states around the country who recognize the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Visit www.allianceforaviablefuture.org for further details and to register.

Alliance for a Viable Future's mission is to develop leadership for bioregional climate solutions and intercultural peacemaking through council programs and community events. For more information and to request interviews with key participants, kindly contact Lev Natan, at lev@allianceforaviablefuture.org.