

Melissa Watkinson-Schutten

Chickasaw and Choctaw, she/her



Melissa@locus-innovations.com



linkedin.com/in/melschutten/



(206) 482-8024



EDUCATION

University of Washington

Master of Arts in Policy Studies

- Independent Capstone Research:
"Tribal Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation: Identifying the Impact of Fractionated Land for a Coastal Community"

Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies and Society, Ethics, and Human Behavior

- Research Seminar: Human Rights and Foreign Policy, *Washington, DC*
- International Studies Seminar: Humanitarian Law, *The Hague, Netherlands*



CONTRIBUTIONS

Washington Conservation Action Board

2023- Present

Advise as a C3 board member on policies and programs that advocate for state-wide environmental progress and EJ; Serve on prize selection committee

Manette Neighborhood Coalition

2022- Present

Chaired a community association's strategic plan update, board meetings, budget decisions, and event design

Rising Voices: Indigenous-Earth Sciences

2015- Present

Presented case studies of and advised on tribal climate adaptation and Indigenous science initiatives at annual workshops

5th National Climate Assessment

2021-2023

Co-authored and advised on *Social Systems and Justice* chapter; Initiated and advised on the first NCA tribal government consultation



PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Locus Innovations, LLC

CEO & Founder

| 04/24-Present

Analysed waste-prevention stakeholder and customer data for strategic planning:

- ◇ Synthesized and analyzed over 1,000 residential customer surveys and 50 organizational stakeholder surveys with quantitative and qualitative data
- ◇ Collaborated with strategic planning team to provide decision-makers with BIPOC, disability, immigrant, elder, and youth disaggregated data

Advised on projects involving qualitative research methodologies and analyses

- ◇ Reviewed project methodologies, advised on best practices for qualitative data analysis, and made project-specific research recommendations

Na'ah Illahee Fund

Deputy Executive Director

| 10/23-06/24

Coached and mediated individuals and teams of Indigenous and non-Native staff:

- ◇ Directed and oversaw Native-led programs for grantmaking, land conservancy, land restoration, food sovereignty, and leadership cohorts

Advised development of an Indigenous land trust program:

- ◇ Engaged with tribal leaders and Native communities to learn barriers, challenges, and opportunities for Indigenous land management
- ◇ Coached program director on Tribal land history, policy, and practices

Led non-profit strategic planning workshops:

- ◇ Facilitated and led organization-wide strategic planning workshops

Puget Sound Partnership; State of Washington

Equity and Environmental Justice Manager

| 09/21-09/23

Created new Equity and Environmental Justice agency department:

- ◇ Built and oversaw a new team and program responsible to implement environmental justice (EJ) state legislation and Tribal government affairs
- ◇ Managed a bi-annual \$1.5M budget to build staff capacity, conduct research, facilitate trainings, and integrate equity and EJ across teams

Designed and executed agency-wide implementation of environmental justice legislation:

- ◇ Partnered across intra-and-interagency teams and EJ leaders to understand programmatic needs and opportunities, design strategies, and align community-based policies

Led equity decision-making as an executive leader:

- ◇ Served on the leadership team of this environmental restoration state agency to integrate equity in agency-wide policies and planning

Managed organizational equity assessment:

- ◇ Worked across departments, with the executive leadership team, and a consulting team to conduct interviews and a survey of all staff
- ◇ Assessed and communicated equity data and recommendations
- ◇ Co-designed policy changes and draft implementation plan

Advised pay equity assessment and policy changes:

- ◇ Conducted internal pay equity audit and advised pay equity consultation
- ◇ Facilitated executive leadership policy development and decision-making

DEI at Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference

2020 and 2022

Co-led development of new DEI track and trainings for a transnational conference

Re-Indigenizing Ecological Consciousness

2022

Co-authored on *Queer Indigeneity: Decolonizing our Relationships to Build a Sense of Belonging* chapter

Oxford Handbook: Indigenous Sociology

2021

Authored *Decolonizing Climate Adaptation by Reacquiring Fractionated Tribal Lands* chapter

Bremerton City Council Candidate

2021

Ran for local office and managed a campaign with support from volunteers to bring equitable and environmental policy priorities to the city

Seattle EJ Committee Co-chair

2017-2019

In collaboration with local community leaders, advised the mayor on implementation of the City of Seattle Equity and Environment Initiative

Oxfam America Campaign Organizer

2012-2015

Led volunteers, engaged congress members, and developed partnerships and events to advocate for food and climate justice

Washington Sea Grant (WSG)

Equity, Access, and Engagement Lead & Social Scientist

| 08/17-08/21

Led design and implementation of 10-year DEI Roadmap:

- ◇ Advised leadership team, staff, and partners on best practices for tribal engagement, EJ, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)
- ◇ Oversaw the development of WSG's 10-year DEI Roadmap

Assessed socio-cultural impacts of ocean changes to tribes:

- ◇ Built and sustained collaborative partnerships with Tribal governments
- ◇ Applied multiple research and analysis methods to community-based participatory research on ocean change and community resilience

Co-produced equity and environmental justice conferences and workshops

- ◇ Co-designed and advised Salish Sea Equity and Justice Symposium
- ◇ Planned and executed nationwide Sea Grant justice & DEI workshops

University of Washington

Research and Outreach Coordinator

| 10/16-03/18

Conservation Scholars Program partnership and curriculum development:

- ◇ Strengthened and developed partnerships with tribes, environmental organizations, and community-based groups to place undergraduate students of color into summer internships
- ◇ Managed a summer field climate curriculum for 20 student fellows

Tribal Climate Science and Health Research

- ◇ Developed the *Tribally Based Climate Science and Health Toolkit* that includes engagement guidelines and teaching modules
- ◇ Collaborated with local tribes to coordinate community-based climate change adaptation and sustainability workshops

The Nature Conservancy

Marc Hershman Marine Policy Fellow

| 09/15-09/16

Washington Coast Restoration Initiative Socio-economic Research

- ◇ Engaged with partners and WA coast communities to improve restoration project proposal outcomes and future socio-economic policy responses

Developed and facilitated training for all staff on tribal engagement

- ◇ Led a chapter-wide *Introduction to Tribal Engagement* training and proposed strategies to improve engagement with tribal governments

UW Graduate Research

Social Science Assistant; Washington Sea Grant

| 01/15-09/15

- ◇ Analyzed and reported on spatial and quantitative social indicators and environmental conditions data for the Washington Marine Spatial Plan

Behavioral Health Assistant; Indigenous Wellness Research

| 01/14-12/14

- ◇ Gathered and analyzed data from focus groups and surveys in support of National Institutes of Health studies that focus on tribal well-being