

David Suzuki's Blue dot tour drops in on Confederacy

By Lynda Powless
Editor

Standing in the middle of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council (HCCC) circle, reknowned environmentalist David Suzuki told the chiefs, "Everything I have learned I have learned from Indigenous peoples.

"I came here today to thank you, as indigenous people in Canada. The Indigenous people of the world have taught me everything I know. You have inspired me to do what I do."

The award winning geneticist, author broadcaster and co founder of the David Suzuki Foundation is on a whirlwind Canada wide tour making a last ditch attempt to convince Canadians that clean air, clean water and a clean environment is a constitutional right.

The 20 community Blue Dot tour is spreading the message that all Canadians

should have the right to drink clean water, breathe fresh air and eat healthy food.

"Blue Dot" is a reference to a famous 1990 NASA photo of Earth from Voyager One. The satellite was turned to take the photo of our tiny planet, just before it left our solar system.

"That's our home. That's where every tyrant and dictator has spilled blood trying to gain a foothold on that little dot. That's where every lover, every poet, every singer, every human being who's ever lived, lived out on that little pale blue dot," he told a crowded longhouse.

He said he began his career as a scientist in the 1960s and came from an immigrant family who were taught the mantra to work hard and get ahead.

"At that time there were no departments of the environment anywhere."

He said it was environmentalists in the 60 and 70s that forced the creations of environmental departments.

He said his blue Dot tour is seeking the support of Canadians to push for an amendment to the Canadian Constitution to make it a right to have a healthy environment.

"We want to see it enshrined in our Constitution that it should be the right of every Canadian to have clean air, clean water and a healthy environment," he said.

He said 110 countries in the world have some kind of right to healthy environment enshrined in their constitution but not Canada.

"Where is our right to it in the Constitution," he said.

He said his tour is asking every Canadian to seek out their municipal politicians and pressure cities to put pressure on their province to push for the amendment.

"We need seven provinces and 50 per cent of the population to amend the constitution."

We didn't know that nuclear bombs would create a radioactive fallout.

"We just didn't know", he

He said he spoke with a young artist that was leading the fight against logging.

"I asked him why he was



Cayuga Chief Sam General and subchief Leroy Hill joke with David Suzuki outside the longhouse Saturday. (Photos by Jim C Powless)

He said during the protests of the 70's "we didn't know the effects of contaminants on the lands. We didn't know that DDT would kill insects but would also seep into the fish and then into the eagles. We didn't know.

said. He said in the 1970s during the logging fights for Haida Gwa, "I know the Haida had high unemployment but they were 100 per cent opposed to logging despite the high paying jobs."

against it when it could bring so much to his people. Jobs, progress."

Suzuki said "he told me 'when they cut the trees we will still be here, but then we will be like every-

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Confederacy meets with Suzuki

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one else."

He said he was astounded. "What he told me in that simple sentence was that to be Haida means to be connected to the land, to the trees, fish, and animals."

He said, "I have learned that indigeneous people look at the world in a different way and it opened up a whole new window for me. A window that was connected to the land." He said "people don't understand you may have undeveloped land worth \$90 million but the people understand there are things more important than the money."

He said environmentalists began fighting against logging, against the building of a dam and when we stopped the dam we stopped fighting only to learn now B.C. is looking at building the dam again so we didn't stop it. We didn't change anything. We have to make Canadi-

ans understand what you do to the environment you do to yourself."

He said the dominant society is made of immigrants who came here to the land of opportunity. Immigrants, he said, with no connection to the land they were coming to live on.

"My grandparents were immigrants, my parents were rootless here but your history goes back thousands of years. You are profoundly connected to the land. But immigrants, all they saw was an opportunity, no connection to the land just dig up the minerals and sell them. Cut the trees and sell them. It was the ethos of my parents to work hard and get ahead but the underlying way of seeing the world that we have in the dominant society is that everything is an opportunity but there is no roots. How we see the world is a deterence.

He said while some see the river as sacred, others

see the river as an opportunity to generate power. "Some see the soil as a community of organisms others as dirt."

He said there has been an unbelievable shift in the way we live. In the 1900s we were in rural village communities. Now we are in big cities where the most important thing in the city is to have a job to earn the money to buy the things we want. Our economy has become the dominate priority."

He said enriching the economy has come at the expense of the earth.

He said Canadians need to demand the right to a healthy environment.

He asked Confederacy for their support.

"I thank you for hanging on to your traditions and your way of looking at the world."

Confederacy Council was not in session Saturday due to a death in a family. The request will be taken to the next council session.