

Weckuwapok (The Approaching Dawn)

Co-directors (alphabetically): Jacob Bearchum, Taylor Hensel, Adam Mazo, Chris Newell, Roger Paul, Kavita Pillay, Tracy Rector, and Lauren Stevens
2022

TRANSCRIPT

Roger Paul

Our great Mother and Great Spirit. Thank you for this beautiful day. We are grateful that you have brought everyone here. And so that we can help the People of the First Light and to help all land dwellers. A long time ago there was this young boy, he remembers some people talking about the Sun and how beautiful it was. And how sacred it is. He too wanted to see the sunrise. The boy remembers his grandmother always saying, "We as the First People, we must help it rise."

Roger Paul

Aho.

Chris Newell

Alright. Welcome Yo-Yo Ma! Yo-Yo Ma asked, "What would be meaningful to Wabanaki people? How do we create something that will cause transformation?" I said, "Play your music at sunrise because that's part of our culture."

Roger Paul

The young boy got up early, in the morning. He told the Knowledge Keeper he has, "Come to raise up the sun for all the people." The Knowledge Keeper just laughed at him. The young boy says then, "How would I raise up the sun?" The Knowledge Keeper says, "You must sing to the sun and welcome the sun. And everyone must help out, then start to sing." The young boy says, "What shall I sing?" "Anything as long as it comes from your heart." And so the young boy begins to sing and the Knowledge Keeper began to sing as well.

Chris Newell

I had a really interesting idea that I would teach Yo-Yo a song, a pow wow song. He's gonna accompany me, so we're gonna see how this is gonna go. So you are ready to give it a try? Alright, here we go!

Our ancestors have 12,000 years of welcoming the day. The meaning for me, personally, in welcoming the sun is deep. I truly am thankful for every day that I get. That I get to be a dad to my kids and I get to raise them in a world where I hope, that when I'm done here in this place, I've left it better for them. And that's what it's all about.

Roger Paul

And all of a sudden the sun begins to rise until everyone could see the sun. And the sun felt so nice and was very bright. The Knowledge Keeper says "The People of the First Light know that

the sun loves us." Slowly the sun started going into the clouds and went, "To share with the other children, so they too can see the sun and feel good with the sun. We the people of the First Light, that is what we must do, that is what we love. May this be the truth forever." Thank you.

Lauren Stevens

Being able to be around our tribal elders, being able to learn songs, being able to just be present, is beautiful. We are Wabanaki and we're still here. Our youth can see this, people that they know taking space, holding space, unapologetically. Kci-woliwon.

Deb Haaland

I feel very committed to embracing my obligation as a Pueblo woman, to care for this earth, and to care for the people on it. When I think about what my ancestors went through fighting famine and drought, trying to live through colonization, holding on to the land, because that's what gives us life. We can't ever give up.

Yo-Yo Ma

I think meaning is so elusive, and yet everybody who spoke today was filled with meaning. The fact that you can think of seven generations back and seven generations forward is a big lesson for us. Who can think that way? You can. The way you take care of the land, and the way you take care of one another, we can learn from that. And so your gift to us we now have to carry forward and do.

Wayne Newell

We're all here to not just listen to people but what follows is perhaps the most powerful thing. We have to take those things into consideration seriously. If we just leave here feeling good temporarily, then we've wasted our time. I see a lot of optimism because I see the generation to follow me. I see the next generation working their damndest. We have a lot of work to do, they have a lot of work to do. Kci-woliwon.