

Frank Kanawha Lake (Indigenous Research Ecologist)



Frank K. Lake is an Indigenous research ecologist who specializes in fire and fuels. A descendant of Karuk, Seneca, and Cherokee cultures, Frank was raised primarily with northwest California cultural beliefs and knowledge systems of the Karuk and the Yurok. Growing up along the rivers and forests of northwest California, his tribal community instilled in him a connection with the land and training on fire and watershed ecology.

On the use of fire, Frank states, “Fire serves as a biodiversity component and burning can help with many resource objectives. Fire actually helps to reduce a hazardous build-up of fuels that lead to larger, non-desired, catastrophic fires.” Now, with a career in the USDA Forest Service, he is using this Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) to guide government agencies toward more regenerative land stewardship practices.

“We can learn from the old ways that have contemporary importance and integrate that into our broader societal approach to fire.”

Frank K. Lake

