

Two Yurok Brothers: Four Dams, and a Lot of Salmon

Sammy Gensaw was 14 and hiking a trail behind the local community college in Eureka, California, when a woman walked up to him and invited him to a meeting. The year was 2008, and an unprecedented alliance between the Klamath River tribes and farmers, fishermen, and environmentalists had resulted in a plan to remove four of seven dams on the river beginning in 2020. The meeting was about making sure it actually happened.

Gensaw had grown up in a fishing family. He often heard stories about how before the dams, a hundred years ago, the spring salmon run was so thick with fish that a person could walk across it. "I grew up on the same mountain ranges that my grandfather did and that his grandfather did," Gensaw says. "I'll never leave this community. That's why I had to make it better."



Soon, Gensaw was a student-coalition community organizer for Undam the Klamath, throwing bake sales so he could travel to the 2009 Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, and educate attendees about the damage their investment in the dams was doing.

When he was 17, Gensaw and his 14-year-old brother, Jon Luke, began teaching local kids how to catch and smoke salmon using traditional Yurok methods. They called the project the Ancestral Guard, and their goal is to make sustainable fishing second nature by the time the dams come down in 2020. Because the brothers teach everyone, not just tribal members, the project doesn't qualify for certain tribal funds, but they're continuing the work. "If these kids grew up on our ancestral territory, then they are my people," Gensaw says. "If you're getting healthy and your neighbor's sick, that's not healthy."

The dam removals, which once seemed so far in the future, will take place soon. Now the brothers are involved in another fight, against a plan to run a liquid natural gas pipeline under the Klamath. "Our people have always fought for the right to fish," Gensaw says.

**"The industrial revolution is over.
It's the restorative revolution now."**

-Heather Smith www.sierraclub.org

World's Toughest Law Against Plastic Bags

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenyans producing, selling or even using plastic bags will risk imprisonment of up to four years or fines of \$40,000 from Monday, as the world's toughest law aimed at reducing plastic pollution came into effect.

The East African nation joins more than 40 other countries that have banned, partly banned or taxed single use plastic bags, including China, France, Rwanda, and Italy.

Many bags drift into the ocean, strangling turtles, suffocating seabirds and filling the stomachs of dolphins and whales with waste until they die of starvation.

"If we continue like this, by 2050, we will have more plastic in the ocean than fish," said Habib El-Habr, an expert on marine litter working with the U.N. Environment Programme in Kenya.

Plastic bags, which El-Habr says take between 500 to 1,000 years to break down, also enter the human food chain through fish and other animals. In Nairobi's slaughterhouses, some cows destined for human consumption had 20 bags removed from their stomachs.

"This is something we didn't get ten years ago but now its almost on a daily basis," said county vet Mbuthi Kinyanjui as he watched men in bloodied white uniforms scoop sodden plastic bags from the stomachs of cow carcasses.

Kenya's law allows police to go after anyone even carrying a plastic bag. But Judy Wakhungu, Kenya's environment minister, said enforcement would initially be directed at manufacturers and suppliers.

"Ordinary wananchi will not be harmed," she told Reuters, using a Kiswahili word for "common man".

It took Kenya three attempts over ten years to finally pass the ban, and not everyone is a fan.

Samuel Matonda, spokesman for the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, said it would cost 60,000 jobs and force 176 manufacturers to close. Kenya is a major exporter of plastic bags to the region.

"The knock-on effects will be very severe," Matonda said.

Big Kenyan supermarket chains like France's Carrefour and Nakumatt have already started offering customers cloth bags as alternatives.

Katharine Houreld and John Ndiso

An Open Letter from Guam to America

On becoming the collateral damage of American warmongering

Dear America,

I am glad that you are finally paying attention to what is happening in Guam. Many of you, as I am reading online, are asking for the first time, "What is Guam?" Every day growing up here, we have been told all about you. I am sorry that it is only when we are the subject of bombs that you even attempt to say the word Guam; there are so many more interesting things I wish you would want to know about us. We, on the other hand, are not as surprised by the latest bomb threat. We are quite used to hearing Guam and bomb in the same sentence. Every month or so, when another missile is tested, or rhetoric fired, we hear how North Korea, or China, or Russia could bomb Guam. I have even saved pictures of China's infamous "Guam Killer" bombs on my computer so our Independence group can use it in Independence 101 presentations as an example of why we need to get free NOW. Yes, there are people in Guam who want independence from you. But there are also people in Guam who hear these threats of bombs and cower to the hype. They start to believe that we need your mighty military bases and beg for more, because then we would not be bombed, right? But you have been the source of all our bomb problems.

The worst bombs that have ever been dropped on Guam were yours near the end of World War II. At the beginning of the war, you left us defenseless to the Japanese, knowing full well that they were planning to invade Guam all along. You safely

boarded your white military wives on ships and sent them home months before the attack, but did nothing to protect us. That's right, the last time an invading nation that you said you would protect us from attacked, you surrendered in 2 days and left 20,000 people to suffer, many falling victim to the most atrocious of war crimes. But we are strong and we survived not just that ugly war but also the losses that came after. When you returned in 1944, you leveled our island with your bombs, leaving most families without a home to return to. We were scattered and displaced so you could build your enormous bases. And we were so grateful to you that our people served and continue to serve your military and die for your freedom in higher numbers per capita than you.

The worst bombs that have ever been dropped on Guam were yours.

Today you occupy nearly one-third of our island, and station bombers and nuclear powered submarines here to flex your might to our neighbors. You play endless war games emitting fumes and dumping waste into our air, water, soil, bodies. We breathe in the fallout when you test your bombs on our sister islands upwind—those clouds make their way down here. We eat fish from the waters you bomb around us. Grieve the beached whales who rot at the shore, led astray by your sonar testing. We are being made to sacrifice—with no consent (and for many of us, against our will)—access to sacred ancient villages and a thousand acres of a lush limestone forest habitat that you want to

destroy to build a firing range for your Marines. You fly bombers over my home at ungodly hours. Come on, America, I am raising babies here. Little ones, who notice when your flag is flown above theirs, and don't like it. Who hide under the slide at their playground and tell their friends to duck when your blaring B-1s, B-2s, be everything in their safe zone. There is a sign on the road that reads, "Slow down, children at play."

Will you please slow down and allow my children to play? I want them to grow up here. This is their/my/mama's mama's mama's homeland. There is no other place in the world I want them to be. I understand that for many

"Americans," you had to flee your homeland. That America became your better life, or at least the promise of it. That many of you long for your homeland and can't return. And sadly, many of you don't think enough about the indigenous Americans whose lands and lives were stolen to manifest this destiny. But this land, this beautiful island everyone wants to bomb because of you, is my land, not yours. And I don't want to flee. I left my land once for your college education. But I ached for home the entire time. As soon as I got my degrees, I came back to use them here. My home is my better life. I am nourished by my land, where my family grows our own food. I am raising bright babies, with the jungle as their backyard, and this is the life my ancestors wanted for me and for them. I want to go to sleep peacefully knowing that my family is safe in our home. So please, stop all this bomb talk. And instead, ask yourself why Guam is still your colony in 2017.

Good night and good morning,
Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero
1:40 a.m. August 10, 2017
Yo'ña, Guåhan(Guam)