

THE ARCTIC TOGETHER

EPISODE SIX | WINTER 2025 **PODCAST**

SHOW NOTES & RESOURCE GUIDE

Centering Indigenous community voices, getting to the root of research, and what it means to be “Arctic Together” through sharing story

 Podcast Website

This Episode

Convergence Working Groups - Fostering Indigenous Led Research Co-leads Mary Beth Jäger and Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon



Navigating the New Arctic
Community Office



Photo by Ana Lena Bercht

About

The *Arctic Together* podcast is a podcast series that centers Indigenous community voices, shares Navigating the New Arctic (NNA) community stories, and highlights different approaches to issues and solutions in Arctic-based research. The NNA-CO Community Extension Office at Alaska Pacific University is the content developer and host of the *Arctic Together* podcast, and aims to build awareness, partnerships, opportunities, and resources for collaboration. From local to international scales, to supporting the next generation of Arctic researchers, *Arctic Together* offers stories and wisdom towards a more holistic understanding of the Arctic.

This episode features the experienced co-leads for the NNA-CO Convergence Working Group's *Fostering Indigenous Led Research*. Mary Beth Jäger (Citizen Band Potowami) and Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon (Iñupiaq) share with us the hopes and joys that being part of this group brings them.



Produced by *Arctic Together* Co-Hosts
JAMES TEMTE AND JESSICA LEWIS-NICORI

NNA-CO Community Extension Office
Alaska Pacific University

Photo by Anna Lena Bercht

SPECIAL FEATURE GUESTS

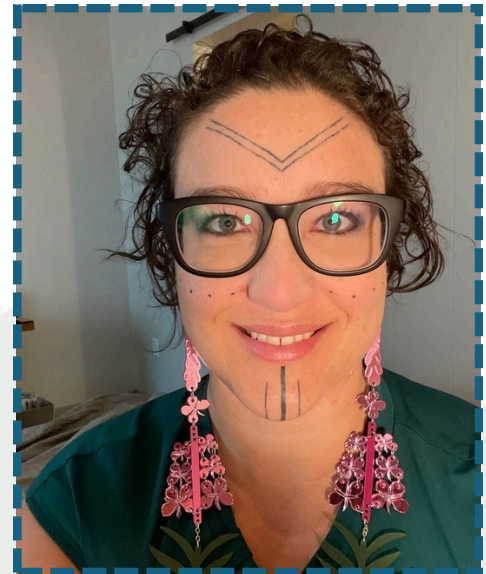
Mary Beth Jäger



Mary Beth Jäger is Citizen Band Potawatomi/Xicana/German descent/settler. Jäger serves as a research coordinator for the Tishman Center For Social Justice and the Environment at the University of Michigan. In their role Mary Beth manages several research projects focused on Indigenous-led research and advises Tishman staff and affiliated graduate students on research projects. Before starting at Tishman they worked as a decade long research analyst at the Native Nations Institute (NNI) at the University of Arizona. At Arizona, Jäger served as a co-lead for the Indigenous Foods Knowledges Network , (NSF-OPP Award#1745499). Currently, they serve as an experienced co-lead for the Fostering Indigenous-led Research Convergence Work Group hosted by the NSF funded NNA-Community Office. Jäger believes in advancing justice and equity through co-production and collaborating with Indigenous communities and communities marginalized to leverage research to their benefit. Outside of work Jäger is a tamale enthusiast, food on the water admirer, sweet on pan dulce, fangirl of the Three Sisters and the list goes on. Besides being a big fan of food, they believe food is medicine and central to culture.

Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon

Dr. Heather Sauyaq Jean Kwamboka Gordon is Iñupiaq and a citizen of the Nome Eskimo Community. She holds a PhD in Indigenous Studies with a concentration in Sustainability. Her work highlights links between culture and wellbeing, emphasizing connectedness with nonhuman and more than human kin, and the importance of listening to Indigenous Knowledges. She is a boundary spanner between knowledge systems and a science diplomat to communicate research to policy makers. She is an Arctic Fulbright 24-26 scholar and co-lead/organized the Global Indigenous Youth Summit on Climate Change in 2023 and 2024. She serves on the US National Academy of Sciences Co-Production of Environmental Knowledge, Methods, and Approaches committee, on the Arctic Research Consortium of the US Board of Directors, and as co-chair for the International Conferences on Arctic Research Planning IV Sustainability Communities RPT3. She is an adjunct researcher at American University and affiliated with the University of Alaska Fairbanks.



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For more of Dr. Gordon's work and resources, visit [her website!](#)

Learn more about the NNA CO Fostering Indigenous Led Research Convergence Working Group:

<https://nna-co.org/strategic-objectives/convergence-research>



Mary Beth and Heather share their thoughts and insights about Fostering (or Amplifying) Indigenous-led Research, the difference between Indigenous-led and researcher-led, and the immediate benefit to both communities and researchers when utilizing Indigenous-led research. Their views, insights, and opinions are theirs; showcasing diversity within the Convergence Working Group and leadership in this relatively new foray into research.

“It’s different... getting to eat a meal with someone versus listening to another PowerPoint. ... It’s relational.”
“Sometimes it’s a space for people to talk. Sometimes it’s a place to heal because there’s been harm. ... We cannot be 100% objective - we all have implicit bias.” Mary Beth on Indigenous-led research relationships

Relationships are more sustainable and hold more accountability when you meet with your team in-person.
“I also think of it as an opportunity to try to make a space within NNA for Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous science to build bridges between Indigenous Knowledge and science and other community working groups.” Heather on the role of the Fostering Indigenous-led Research Convergence Working Group

“...[D]ominant paradigms of science and epistemologies are not the only ways to understand the world.”
Heather’s insight on Indigenous knowledge and expertise



Direction and Forward Movement of Fostering and Amplifying Indigenous-led Research

Part two of this podcast dives deeper into the conversation about Fostering or Amplifying Indigenous-led Research, exploring the “why” and “what” of Indigenous-led Research. Often mentioned is the future of Fostering or Amplifying Indigenous-led Research. We also had a reminder of the presence of baby Allison who also chimed in. Much of the work that happens today is using the tools we have at hand, tools that our predecessors had, and guidance from Indigenous leaders (whether we are Indigenous or not).

“There is a lot of really cool movement going on in ... Amplifying Indigenous-led Research. What are solutions for climate change, environment, biodiversity, things like that.”

“There are systems that are changing...” on tenure for Universities and requirements especially for early-career researchers

“Having to learn how to be in relationships can be hard,” regarding relationships that impact research and life relationships in general

Mary Beth on Amplifying Indigenous-led research

“I ask our allies to step up and be mentors to the early-career researchers, show them the right way to do things, the ethics. ... Ethics is a part of a Sociology PhD, it’s also a part of a Sociology PhD, but is it a part of a physics PhD, a chemistry or biology or hard sciences, or the Ice sciences, ... The ice doesn’t exist without humans. The permafrost doesn’t exist without humans. These are Native lands, these are places we live. ...”

Heather on reasons ethics should be taught to early career scientists who work in and with Arctic peoples



ARCUS Arctic Research Seminar Series w/ Heather Gordon, Building Relationships with Indigenous Nations for Indigenous-led Land and Water Stewardship



Fostering Indigenous-led Research CWG Report link: https://www.nna-co.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Fostering_Indigenous-led_Research_CWG_Report-Summer2024.pdf

Podcast Show Notes

Click the links below for more information & resources shared by guests.

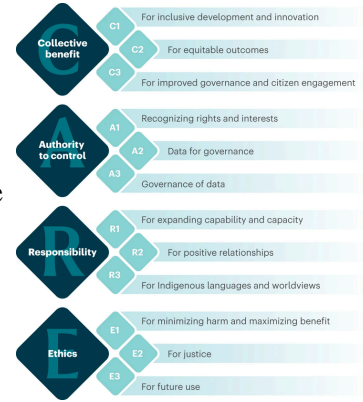


[Kyle Whyte: Braiding Kinship and Time: Indigenous Approaches to Environmental Justice](#)

[Mary Beth Jäger and Dr. Lydia Jennings Tubeville Speaker Series \(March 18, 2022\)](#)

[ARCUS Arctic Research Seminar Series w/ Heather Gordon, Building Relationships with Indigenous Nations for Indigenous-led Land and Water Stewardship](#)

The Collaboratory for Indigenous Data Governance site: <https://indigenoustatalab.org/> This site includes a links to resources like the [Operationalizing the CARE and FAIR Principles for Indigenous Data Futures](#) article, the [Care Data Maturity Model](#) (shown to the right), and more!



The [Inuit Circumpolar Council](#) has a wonderful document, the [Circumpolar Inuit Protocols for Equitable and Ethical Engagement](#). This guide has some history about the creation of the guide, followed by 8 protocols that are an excellent starting point for beginning and continuing equitable and ethical engagement.

[Indigenous Peoples Terminology Guide](#) has information and some history about common misconceptions around Indigenous/Native American peoples. It starts with terminology, followed by common microaggressions that Native American and Indigenous peoples face.

Further Reading & Resources

Featured Music



From the artist
Byron Nicholai

David-Chavez, Dominique M., Gavin, Michael C., Ortiz, Norma, Valdez, Shelly, and Carrol, Stephanie Russo. “A values-centered relational science model: supporting Indigenous rights and reconciliation in research.” *Ecology & Society*, 29 (2):11. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14768-290211>

Ed.s Walter, M., Kukutai, T., Carrol, S.R., Rodrigues-Lonebear, D. [Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Policy](#). London, Routledge. October 29, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429273957>

Jennings, L., Anderson, T., Martinez, A., Sterling, R., Chavez, D., Garba, I., Hudson, M. Garrison, N.A., and Carroll, S.R. “Applying the ‘CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance’ to ecology and biodiversity research.” *Nature Ecology & Evolution*, vol. 7. October 2023, p 1547-1551. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-023-02161-2>

Gordon, H. S. J. and Him, D. A. “Conducting Research ‘In A Good Way’: Relationships as the Foundation of Research.” *Arctic Science*. October 10, 2024. <https://cdnsiencepub.com/doi/abs/10.1139/as-2023-0078>

“That’s another thing, Place-Based Meetings. That is another different kind of methodology.”

“Our research is in our stories, its in our understanding of the world. ... We’ve survived and adapted. ”

- Mary Beth Jäger

“Trying to think about things a way they hadn’t before. ... Not all of us that are co-leads ... are Indigenous. We have allies to Indigenous people who are on this group, who are the leads, saying what has been done and what shouldn’t be done, ... that is powerful.”

- Heather Jean Sauyaq Kwamboka Gordon

U M A T I N
I N U U R U Q



NNA
CO

The Navigating the New Arctic Community Office (NNA-CO) builds awareness, partnerships, opportunities, and resources for collaboration and equitable knowledge generation within, between, and beyond the research projects funded by the National Science Foundation’s NNA Initiative. The office builds capacity in early career researchers and provides unique opportunities to inspire and engage a wide audience toward a more holistic understanding of the Arctic—its natural environment, built environment, and diverse cultures and communities.

The NNA-CO is supported through a cooperative agreement (Award # 2040729) with the U.S. National Science Foundation.

For more information, visit nna-co.org.

Photo by Nil Rodes