

creation of the Bears Ears National Monument, proclaimed by President Obama in 2016.

Wilkinson received numerous awards and honors during his lifetime, including the Earle A. Chiles Award from the Oregon High Desert Museum celebrating his career-long dedication to the High Desert region, and the Twanat Award from the Warm Springs Museum recognized his tireless work in support of Indian people.

In addition to *The People Are Dancing Again*, Wilkinson was the author of 13 other books, including *Fire on the Plateau: Conquest and Endurance in the American Southwest* (1999); *Messages from Frank's Landing: A Story of Salmon, Treaties and the Indian Way* (2000); and *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* (2005).

According to the *Colorado Sun*, "Wilkinson, a prolific author of 14 books and many more scholarly papers, spent this year focused on his latest project, a book focused on treaty fishing rights and the 1974 Boldt Decision, one of the biggest court decisions issued in the 20th century regarding Native American rights."

Wilkinson was born July 29, 1941. He is survived by his wife, Anne, and three sons. Services were pending at press time.



Courtesy photo from Teresa Simmons

Archie Ben (l), Charles Wilkinson and Art Bensell in an undated photo

Nourishing food connections in our wild world provide learning opportunities

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD, Head Start Consulting Nutritionist

Belated congratulations to the Head Start students and their families who completed their school year. It is a wild world out here. With that in mind, I'd like to explore access to food and how we may experience connection and benefit from the foods we find.

This concept is not limited to wild foraging and may include what grows around us, as well as navigating the food distribution system (food pantries, etc.). I offer information for families in my role as consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start.

I believe in the mission of the Oregon Food Bank (OFB): "Because no one should be hungry." OFB strives to connect people with food today and builds community power to end hunger at its roots. Frequently, lack of food access is related to policies that need to be changed for wider access. These disparities are well-known in Tribal communities.

At the time of my writing, I'm struck by the abundance of plants around me. While I know much about food and plants, I'm humbled by my lack of ability to use and share the abundance of plants around me while I also co-create with nature to provide food and habitat for birds, bees and more.

Listed below are my guidelines on how I try to approach this concept of finding and connecting with our foods while finding personal benefit and balance with nature:

- Communicate directly with foods and plants. They are our teachers and our elders.
- Know your surroundings. Respect and engage with the natural landscape as well as social structure and programs.
- Identify your needs, seek matches and make adjustments in order to benefit by your surroundings in sustainable ways.
- Open your heart, tap in and experience the vast potential in every nutritional source.

- Community is foundational for health: Communities of plants hold information. People and plants co-create to form larger communities for mutual benefit.
- Repeat: Communicate directly with foods and plants in an ever-deepening connection.

Communicate directly with foods and plants. They are our teachers and our elders. This ancient concept is no surprise to Native culture, yet it may seem new or difficult in our current world. I believe this direct communication holds especially deep significance as humanity enters a social crisis. Many people are turning to sacred plant medicine ceremonies for spiritual awakening.

I believe all plants are sacred and have wise information to share. I seek information from the natural world. I haven't chosen to knowingly ingest or seek guidance from genetically engineered (GMO) foods, however. Perhaps GMO plants also have stories to tell.

Find a spot to sit with plants in nature or sit with plants as you hold or ingest them. Go into meditation, ask for connection, let the messages come, and consider writing or documenting what you learn. Act on it.

Know your surroundings. Respect and engage with the natural landscape as well as social structure and programs. Learn your local setting and identify the plants. Observe their placement and how they relate to the community.

Sometimes I see massive abundance of specific plants. Sometimes my first instinct is to "manage" or eliminate what appears to be imbalanced. When I am open, however, I sometimes experience a call for my engagement to learn, to use and benefit from the abundant plant. Often times, it is the medicine I need for myself or another.

In spite of my appreciation for fennel when it is coming up everywhere all spring and summer, I lack space to start different seeds and my other plants become crowded because fennel is "hogging" my real estate (my attitude even surprises me). Generally, I value fennel for its seed as a digestive aid. In our rainy

fall, I sometimes struggle to navigate the weather and my availability for harvesting the seed.

This year, I am beginning to use the fresh green fennel leaves and tender stalks to make tea. The flavor is mild, even when I fill my jars with the plant material and steep them in hot water for several successions.

I believe that leaves from plants transfer information to the water to support my body's hydration, as I've shared in earlier articles. The same can be said of the mint and lemon balm leaves that also inhabit my garden spaces without my effort.

I sense that fennel is calling me into deeper relationship with her. My actions, however, are also based on intellectual thought. It seems that my decision to clear fennel from my stone walkways is practical, while my brewing it into tea is a practice of creative engagement. I then add the spent plant material to my compost and it in turn nurtures the soil for future food.

For those of us who live in surroundings with less access to plant life, this practice may include social structure and local programs as we learn the local resources for food distribution when funds are short to feed our families. As we walk through the food pantry, let us choose based on our true needs and right relationship, rather than cravings. At the same time, this may be a good opportunity to try the "new foods" that seek to get our attention.

Identify your needs, seek matches and make adjustments in order to benefit by your surroundings in sustainable ways. When I go to a food pantry, I sometimes push the boundaries of my needs and choose foods that are more "delicious and tempting" than beneficial to my health. This is a deep social concern. Often food pantries are an outlet for foods that would otherwise go to waste if not provided to "hungry people." I see this as a tricky business.

I've learned that I need to be clear about my needs because with poor choices, I don't feel and function as well. I invite you and your family to observe how you feel and function in response to the foods you consume.

Our consequences are a form of information. Our connection and relationship with these foods can inform our choices, such as how often or how much we consume. Many food pantries have items that require knowledge and skill for preparation, especially when they are fresh foods. Asking for tips and learning how to prepare these foods is a form of adaptation to further benefit from our surroundings. This is also true for wild foods in nature.

Open your heart, tap in and experience the vast potential in every nutritional source. By this I mean show up fully for these decisions. Are you honest about your needs and those of your family and children? Are you in denial because to do otherwise is too hard? It may be too hard right now, yet being honest and aware can fuel your adaptive strategies as you move forward.

Your food and plant connection can be powerful. Exercise reverence and respect for life, yet allow creative and playful expression in this vast potential for nourishment. Tea and broth from plant material alone can boost your family's vitality in powerful and expansive ways. Nourishment includes this plant/food connection and is not limited to identified nutrients.

Community is foundational for health: Communities of plants hold information. People and plants co-create to form larger communities for mutual benefit. I strive to remember this community principle in every article I write.

The point here is to broaden our partnership for mutual benefit with the plant kingdom by connecting with them. They have been observing us as willing partners in our health and nutrition. When we co-create, we work together to nurture and protect our environment as the plants inform and care for us.

In full circle, we **repeat and communicate directly with foods and plants in an ever-deepening connection.**

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers nutritional support at no cost to Head Start families. If you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child or want to discuss family nutrition concerns, please contact your teacher or the director and ask for a phone call with the nutritionist.