

**Rose High Bear Biographical Sketch**  
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## Summary:

Rose High Bear (Deg Hit'an Dine, Inupiaq) is Founder and Executive Director of Elderberry Wisdom Farm, the Native American 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation located in rural Marion County, Oregon. Born and raised in a remote subarctic Athabaskan village of McGrath on Alaska's Kuskoquim River, her grandmother's lineage is from the Yukon River and the 14,500 year-old traditional village of Anvik, Alaska. She moved as a young child to rural Coos County, Oregon where she went through public schools in Coquille, and graduated from Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon (B.S.).

High Bear is Founding Director of Elderberry Wisdom Farm, located in rural Marion County, Oregon (see [www.elderberrywisdom.org](http://www.elderberrywisdom.org)). She created the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Workforce Project, a 5-year career pathway planning initiative in partnership with Chemeketa Community College which continues to provide experiential service learning training for Native American and other students of color pursuing environmental conservation, agricultural and horticultural career pathways, including microenterprise development.

She also developed the Native American Biodiversity Accelerator in 2022, the agricultural micro-enterprise business development initiative for Native American adults and other students of color. This social and economic development initiative created several microenterprise businesses, new nonprofit staff jobs, ongoing cohort development, and is supported by eleven partners.

Rose formed Blue Elderberry Farm LLC in 2019 and is currently growing a crop of *Sambucus nigra* ssp. *Cerulea*, the elderberry plant species native to Oregon. In 2021-2 she developed a business plan to provide this value-added specialty product to increasingly health-conscious consumers. Plans include producing a line of elderberry syrup, plus elderflower lotions to treat eczema and psoriasis. More recently, in 2023, she formed two conservation businesses, Native American Habitat Restoration LLC and Native American Plant Nursery and is training cohorts of Native and other workers of color over several years to become owners/operators.

Earlier in her career, she co-founded Wisdom of the Elders, Inc. and dedicated herself for 30 years to its mission and vision as Executive Director. Projects included Wisdom Agricultural Business Incubator which provided agricultural micro-enterprise training to Native adults; Discovering Yidong Xinag environmental science and TEK lesson plans for schools, and Discovering Our Story health and wellness curriculum designed to strengthen resilience in response to historical trauma among Native American families.

Rose is the Editor of the biography of Martin High Bear, the late Lakota medicine man and spiritual leader (1919 - 1995). The 300-page book features his vision, The Seven Commandments of the Sacred Buffalo Calf Woman, and shares the ancient cultural values and spiritual qualities of his ancestors. The inspiration came to her from the Spirit World in 1988, telling her she would write his biography and that it would have an impact on the peoples of the world. So between 1990 and 2020, she prepared for this role by completing the American Indian Oral History Collection, helping to record 450+ Native American elders, oral historians, environmental scientists and cultural leaders. It will be available to the public in 2024.

She was also Executive Producer of several multimedia productions, including the *Native Wisdom Documentary Film Series*, *Wisdom of the Elders Radio Program* and *Discovering Our Story TV*.

High Bear also formed the Northwest Indian Storytellers Association in 2004 and worked with a group of Native storytellers to hold 11 annual tribal storytelling festivals and emerging tribal storytellers' workshops in Oregon and Washington, funded by National Endowment for the Arts, Oregon Cultural Trust and others. She also sponsored multicultural gatherings for public audiences, including documentary film screenings, and a TEK Symposium.

### **Work Experience:**

**2019 - Present:** Founding Director, Elderberry Wisdom Farm (aka Wisdom of the Elderberry Farm), the 501(c)(3) Native American nonprofit offering horticultural and farming career pathways and microenterprise opportunities for Native American adults interested in restoring local ecosystems; and developing habitat restoration, horticultural or agricultural microenterprises which can provide opportunities for multigenerational prosperity for vulnerable Native American workers and their families. We also produce culturally tailored multimedia ecology and health and wellness curriculum for Native students; and film production training for Native youth. Partners include Chemeketa Community College, Marion Soil and Water Conservation Service, Chemawa Indian School and a number of other collaborative partners.

**2020 - Present:** Owner, Blue Elderberry Farm LLC with plans to cultivate, grow, harvest, produce and market a line of organic locally-sourced blue elderberry syrup. This initiative serves as a model to Native people pursuing agricultural and horticultural career pathways through microenterprise business ownership.

**2017 - 2019:** Senior Advisor for Wisdom Agricultural Business Incubator which provided microenterprise training for Native American adults developing horticultural or agricultural career pathways.

**2015 - 2018:** Founder of Wisdom Workforce Development, LLC, formed as a social and economic and environmental justice enterprise at Wisdom of the Elders, Inc. in 2015. WWD, LLC provides habitat restoration work for low-income Native Americans with contracts from government agencies and nonprofits, including Portland Metro, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Sandy River Delta Watershed Council, East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. Workers completing environmental assessment and habitat restoration internships and workforce readiness training were given opportunities to earn a living wage through contracts working on public lands and local natural areas.

**1993 - 2019:** Executive Director, Wisdom of the Elders, Inc., the Native American non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. She formed Wisdom in 1993 with founder Martin High Bear, the late Lakota spiritual leader and medicine man and developed Wisdom's vision of Native American cultural and environmental sustainability, multimedia education and race reconciliation. Its mission: Wisdom records and preserves oral history, cultural arts and traditional knowledges of exemplary Native American elders, cultural leaders and environmentalists in collaboration with arts and cultural organizations, educational institutions and public agencies.

**2013 - 2019:** Executive Producer of Wisdom's *Native Wisdom Documentary Film Series* featuring environmental issues and rich cultural arts of Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Documentaries continue to be shared at film screenings locally and regionally. Clips from the films are also used in Wisdom's culturally-tailored multimedia curriculum, *Discovering Yidong Xinag*.

**2013 - 2019:** Executive Producer of *Discovering Yidong Xinag Educational Toolkit* which includes culturally tailored multimedia environmental science curriculum developed since 2012 that is specifically created for Native American students and schools. This Native American youth leadership initiative

provides Native youth and family members with classroom education and hands-on environmental assessment and habitat restoration service learning during field trips to local natural areas. The replicable model includes Summer Field Science Camps, Native American Saturday Science Academies and Film Screening and Community Consultations. Native peer mentors develop a career pathway plan, learn leadership and mentoring skills and gain video production experience while helping middle school youth accomplish STEAM camp activities. Partners included Beaverton School District, Beaverton, Oregon; and Chemawa Indian Boarding School, Salem, Oregon.

**2009 - 2019:** Executive Producer of *Discovering Our Story* Health and Wellness Curriculum. She produced 36 sets of culturally tailored multimedia curricula for Native American adults. She researched education models to develop mental health, addictions, domestic violence and diabetes rehabilitation and prevention materials plus career pathway planning. Lesson plans include video productions of exemplary Native elders and storytellers and sets of five lesson plans based on the Native American hero's journey story model. This program was accepted as a best practices model by SAMHSA for addictions prevention.

**2010 - 2019:** Executive Producer of *Discovering Our Story TV Program*. This series has aired monthly from April 2010 until 2018 in Portland OR at Portland Community Media TV. We share Wisdom-produced videos and consult with tribal leaders on diverse issues. We also train Native volunteers in video field production, post production and television studio production.

**2004 - 2017:** Formed Northwest Indian Storytellers Association in 2004 to encourage, preserve and strengthen traditional tribal storytelling in Oregon, Washington and Idaho and provide cultural arts to public audiences at annual storytelling festivals and emerging tribal storyteller academies. Eleven years of public storytelling festivals and emerging tribal storytellers' workshops were held between 2005-2017.

**2001 - 2018:** Executive Producer of *Wisdom of the Elders Radio Program* which produced four series featuring traditional ecological knowledge and western science plus oral history and cultural arts of tribal communities. This series of public radio programs uses a cultural magazine format that intertwines the voices of diverse Native American elders and storytellers with special features on oral history, elder wisdom, environmental science, art, linguistics, as well as traditional and contemporary music.

**1989-1990:** Assistant to State On Scene Coordinator at the State of Alaska's Emergency Response Center, Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Response Center, Alaska State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (Valdez and Anchorage, Alaska) during the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Tribal Liaison to Native villages affected by the oil spill, communicating state oil spill response activities and policy to village councils and community leaders. State GSA 16 Planner. Public Information Officer, researching, preparing and editing the Oil Spill Report for the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation during the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill.

### **Synergistic Activities:**

- Currently: Oregon Community Food Systems Network member of Policy, Farming for the Future, and Equity working groups
- 1996 & 2006 - Native American Scholar, Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History National Anthropological Archives, Washington, D.C.
- 1996, 2000, 2001 - Native American Writer's Fellowship, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson VT
- 2009, 2010 - CAISE Fellow, Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education, National Science Foundation Informal Science Education, Washington, DC.
- 2009, 2010, 2011 - Cosmic Serpent Fellow, Center for Science Education, Space Sciences Laboratory, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA