

# TWO RIVERS

**Greenleaf Street Productions**

19946 Lubao Pl.

Chatsworth CA 91311

[www.greenleafstreet.com](http://www.greenleafstreet.com)

Contact: Rod Mitchell 818-363-1477

## About The Film



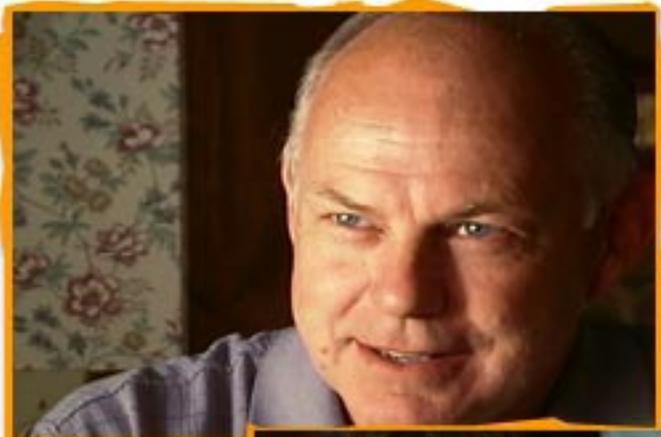
“TWO RIVERS” is a rich, lyrical, 60-minute documentary aimed at a multi-faceted audience, which seamlessly layers together several powerful components. The contemporary story is told through in-depth interviews with all the Native and European American principals who spearheaded the reconciliation meetings, as well as exclusive, intimate footage of the Two Rivers Pow-Wows. The tale of the past unfolds through memoirs, letters, prophecies, and other historical materials, read by Native and European American actors. And the spiritual element is conveyed through the use of authentic Plateau Indian prayers and sacred songs (many of them recorded live during ceremonies filmed for “TWO RIVERS”), as well as through hauntingly beautiful, visually poetic images of the Methow Valley today.

Although attempts at Native and European American reconciliation are not unheard of, they are often superficial and fail to produce lasting changes—usually because whites set the agenda. “TWO RIVERS” will thus appeal to both whites and Natives who want to learn effective means for connecting and healing their wounds, as well as to any individuals or groups interested in healing rifts caused by racism or divisions of any sort. In addition, by honoring the Native point of view, “TWO RIVERS” reveals a history that is becoming increasingly unfamiliar to Native American youth and is largely unknown to European Americans.

But more than anything else, this film is a fascinating human story with large implications:

“TWO RIVERS” shows how people from different worlds can create profound, lasting friendships if they are willing to adopt an open attitude, experiment with new ways of connecting, and learn to speak, listen, and act from their hearts.

## About The Film



## The Story

In the fall of 1999, Glen Schmekel was taking a walk on his property in Washington State. "As I was in this contemplative mode, I felt like I heard a word in my heart that was asking two questions," recalls the school district executive. "The first question was, 'Have you considered my host people?' And the second question was, 'Have you been planting any seeds that would grow up to a harvest?'"

Schmekel was living with his wife, Carolyn, an interior designer, in the small, upscale, predominantly white town of Twisp, located at the confluence of the Twisp and Methow rivers in Washington. Schmekel knew right away that the first question referred to the original inhabitants of the valley where Twisp lay: The Methow Indians, a Plateau Indian tribe who had been largely decimated by historical white policies and practices. The few Methows who had survived had been shut out of their valley for decades, shunted onto the nearby Colville reservation, and forbidden to fish, hunt, or harvest their sacred food and medicinal plants. The second question, Glen thought, referred to a feeling he and Carolyn had that something was missing from life in their community. "Are you doing anything [to create] the harvest in our society?," he asked himself. "Or just wishing and hoping, thinking, planning, dreaming?"

The idea of initiating something that might expand and enrich community life in Twisp was exciting to the Schmekels, but they were uncertain how to proceed. They began to look for someone who could help them locate the Methows and teach them how to "connect" with these "host people." Through a series of coincidences, the couple met John GrosVenor, a Cherokee Nazarene minister living on the Colville reservation, and Spencer Martin, a spiritual leader of Methow, Squaxin, and Colville Indian descent. As these four came together and drew in other Native and European Americans from the Methow Valley area, a remarkable journey unfolded.

"TWO RIVERS," a 60-minute documentary, traces this moving journey of unexpected discovery, connection, reconciliation, and lasting social change.

## About The Film



## The Structure

"TWO RIVERS" tells two parallel, interrelated stories. At its base is the historical tale of the American North West, a land once revered by its Native inhabitants, and eventually taken over by European American settlers. Layered over this history is the present-day story of a group of ordinary Native and European American individuals who come together by chance, and end up examining, grappling with, and healing centuries-old wounds, forming lifelong friendships in the process.

Flowing through three acts, "TWO RIVERS" dips back and forth between these two story lines, showing how history impacts contemporary lives and demonstrating the power of reconciliation methods drawn from Native American spiritual and cultural practices.

## Act 1

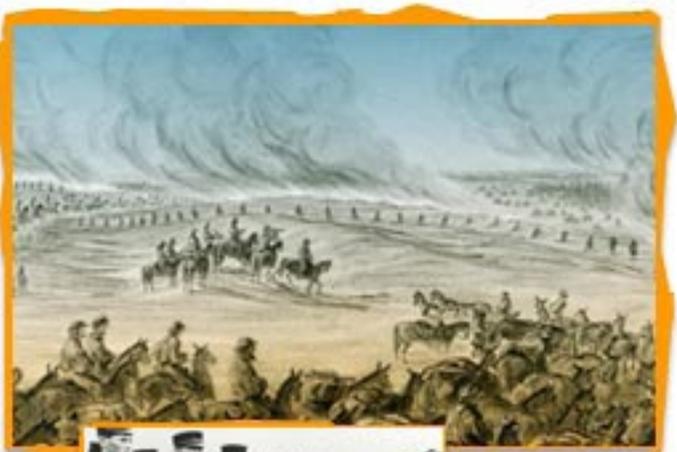
*"The time was when Our Father, who lives above the clouds, loved our fathers, who lived long ago. And his face was bright, and he talked with our fathers..."*

--Chief Washakie (Shoshoni)

In the beginning Creator created all life, so all life was sacred. All living things were an important part of the whole. In one particularly beautiful valley were the Methow. They were given an abundance of all they needed: Fresh water, bear, deer, salmon, and berries. They lived in harmony with all of these things, taking only what they needed, always respecting and being grateful for them, and teaching their children to honor them as well. The Methow knew how to train their people, how to teach them the importance of respect, of family, of community. But this life was not to last. A strange people came with strange ways. They took Creator's gifts without respect or reverence. They brought disease and famine. They said Methow ways had no value, though the Methow never needed soldiers, or jails, or policemen. They put up fences, and kept them from hunting, fishing, and gathering what the Creator provided. They took their land, rounded them up, and sent them far away.



## About The Film



### Act 2

As Spencer Martin points out in "TWO RIVERS": "What you learn in the history books isn't actually what happened." The Twisp reconciliation meetings begin with John GrosVenor screening a series of documentaries for the whites, showing the values of their culture and the near-genocide of their race from the Native perspective. Historically the Plateau Indians were a proud, culturally rich, people. Initially they welcomed the whites, as hospitality was a part of their culture. In the 1820s, Plateau peoples and European Americans created mutually beneficial relationships centered around trade; Natives and whites often intermarried, their offspring accepted by both cultures. But by the mid-1800s, the policy of Manifest Destiny had taken hold, and European American soldiers, politicians, and settlers were flooding the west. Many of these whites viewed the Natives as little more than animals, to be tamed by forced Christian conversion, driven off their lands, or altogether decimated. The result was a legacy of pain, mistrust, and betrayal that endures to this day.

As this history emerges through the documentary screenings and the white Twisp couples truly listen and learn, the Native Americans begin to feel confident enough to share what being an Indian in America means from their personal perspectives. They express the depth of their rage and grief because their culture has been disrespected, their values trivialized, their spiritual beliefs demonized. We hear their first-hand stories of being torn from families to attend white-run boarding schools, of enduring racist abuse, of living in grinding poverty, of witnessing loved ones descend into alcoholism and suicide.

In a series of meetings over a period of five years, the Indians follow their tradition of "speaking from the heart"—a concept with which the whites are initially unfamiliar and uncomfortable. But as the Schmekels, Races, and Downeys practice listening without judgment, their own feelings of empathy, personal responsibility, and sorrow emerge. The two groups gradually form bridges of understanding and then deeper emotional ties.

## About The Film



By operating from their hearts, these ordinary people set in motion a profound, unexpected healing.

### Act 3

By 2003, the two groups feel it's time to bring their private reconciliation process into the larger community, and the community seems excited to receive it. The first Two Rivers Powwow, held that August at the confluence of the Twisp and Methow rivers, is a public reconciliation ceremony acknowledging the changes that have occurred between the local Native and European Americans. A ripple effect begins as other white townspeople and reservation Natives are drawn to the ceremony.

Suddenly, following the Powwow, there is a spontaneous upsurge of grassroots efforts to address historic Native grievances in the Methow Valley. Two and a half acres of land are donated for a Methow cultural museum. Local ranchers and farmers respond positively to a petition asking them to open their properties to Indians so they can harvest their sacred medicine plants and foods. A plan is made to integrate Methow cultural teachings into the school curriculum.

So powerful is the transformation taking place that Powwows are planned as future annual events. All agree that this is not a culmination but a beginning. An effective method of reconciling differences and healing wounds has been found. Relations between Native and European Americans continue to deepen... There is healing in the valley, and its spreading into the wider world...

*“ I hear what the ground says.... The water says the same thing.... Feed the Indians well....”  
The grass says the same thing.... The ground says, “The Great Spirit placed me here to produce all that grows on me, trees and fruit.” The same way the ground says, “It was from me that man was made.... Take good care of it and do each other no harm.”*

--Chief Washakie (Shoshoni)

## The Reconciliation "Group"



### John & Gerri GrosVenor

John, (Echota Cherokee), is Director of the First Nations Outreach of the North West District of the Church of the Nazarene. Gerri, his wife, is Yankton Sioux. Both live on the Colville reservation in Nespelem Washington, and are active in community life there. John travels frequently, speaking at various organizations as an apologist for Native American culture, and on the issues that separate Natives and Non-Natives. He has been a key leader in the reconciliation group, skilled both in teaching Non-Natives Native American cultural fundamentals, and in leading them to develop better ways of facilitating reconciliation.



### Glen & Carolyn Schmekel

Glen is an executive for the Methow Valley School District, his wife Carolyn owns and operates a successful interior decorating business in Winthrop. Both are well-regarded leaders in numerous community organizations in Twisp. Over the years they have become particularly articulate on Native / Non-Native relationships, and are beginning to develop a wider audience for their experiences and expertise in Native American issues.



### Spencer Martin

Spencer is Squaxin, Colville, and Methow. He was raised traditionally from an early age by his aunt, who hoped he would take on her role as spiritual leader for several tribes in North Central Washington, which he eventually did. Because of his position among the tribes, he has been particularly effective in interesting traditional reservation Natives in contact and relationship with European Americans. Also an effective leader, Spencer is particularly gifted at translating Native American cultural principles into terms that European Americans can grasp. His input and leadership in this respect has been an important foundation for the group, and a key to its success. Spencer led the initiative to create a documentary for the reconciliation group.

## The Reconciliation "Group"



### Ron & Cheryl Race

Ron owns and operates his own locksmith company in Twisp; Cheryl writes and markets a line of custom greeting cards. Both are also active leaders in their community, and dedicated supporters of the powwow. Rons' outspoken honesty about his previous insensitivity to Native people is remarkable. His affection for Native Americans now is infectious, as is both their passion for all Native causes.



### Steve & Georgia lukes

Georgia lukes passed in 2005, some eight months before the film was completed. Prior to that time, both Steve (Palouse), and Georgia (Wenatchee) lived on the Colville reservation as senior and respected elders among their people. Well into his 80's, Steve continues to be an active leader in the reservations cultural activities, and other programs that support Native culture. Initially reluctant to attend the Twisp meetings due to negative experiences with racism in the Methow, the lukes became active participants, and instrumental in supporting, developing, and organizing the reconciliation powwows.



### Marge & Phil Downey

Residents of the nearby Okanogan valley, Marge and Phil are known throughout the greater Omak area for the work they do on behalf of various needy residents in the Okanogan Valley. They feed, clothe, and often house some of the valley's most destitute people. They volunteer for and support many of the valley's Native American activities. Along with the Races and Schmekels, they make up the Non-Native core of the group.

## Filmmakers



### Rodney Mitchell

(Producer, Director, Two Rivers Co-author)

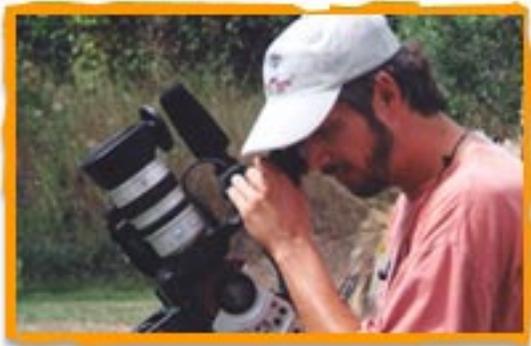
After completing a documentary film education at UCLA, Rod Mitchell oversaw postproduction for Sparkletts commercials for two years, and wrote, produced, and directed a series of corporate videos. "Two Rivers" was the opportunity he had been looking for to launch Greenleaf Street documentary productions.



### Diana Rico

(Two Rivers Co-author)

After 15 years as a freelance journalist, Diana transitioned into reality and documentary writing, and spent the last ten years as senior writer & producer for both A&E and E! Entertainments' biography series. Her most recent credits include the highly regarded "Urban Jungle" - a 13 hour reality series, which examined the experiences nine privileged kids had while spending a month in a Los Angeles barrio.

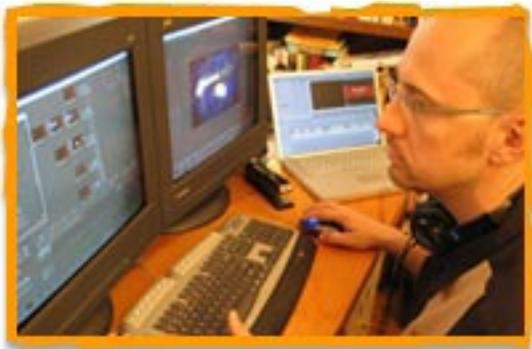


### Mark Vicente

(Principal Photography)

Mark's career as a cinematographer spans some twenty years, with credits that include "Sarafina" (Whoopi Goldberg), "Fatherhood" - (Patrick Swayze & Halle Berry), "Slow Burn" - (Minnie Driver & James Spader). His directorial debut, "What the Bleep Do We Know?" was released this past year, and has been a hit on the independent film circuit.

## Filmmakers



### Christian Glawe

(Editor)

Chris is a veteran editor with over fifteen years of experience. His broadcast & documentary credits include Travel Channel and Discovery, Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures, Two guys Garage, and The Wilderness Society. His commercial credits include Busch Gardens, the U.S. Air Force, Time Warner, AT&T, J. Walter Thompson, Leo Burnett, and DDB Needham. Chris recently relocated to Los Angeles to expand his documentary and feature film career.

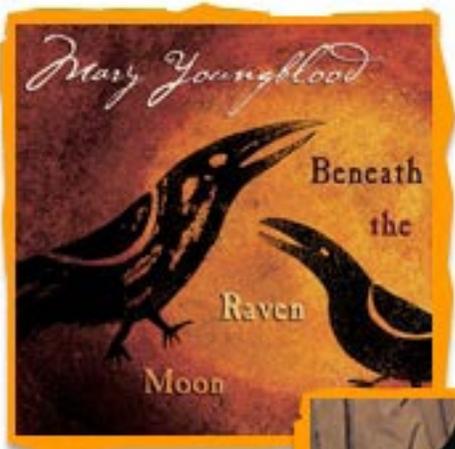


### Christopher Hoag

(Composer)

Emmy nominated composer Christopher Hoag has written music for a wide range of projects in many different venues. His credits include multiple television series on ABC, Discovery, and Fox; including the pilot episode of "House M.D." (for which he received a 2005 Emmy nomination for outstanding dramatic music composition for a series), the Hyperion/Sony feature "3-Way", Dustin Blacks' documentary "My Life With Count Dracula", and the IMAX film "Thrill Ride" as well as their first ride film "Dolphins: The Ride".

## Music

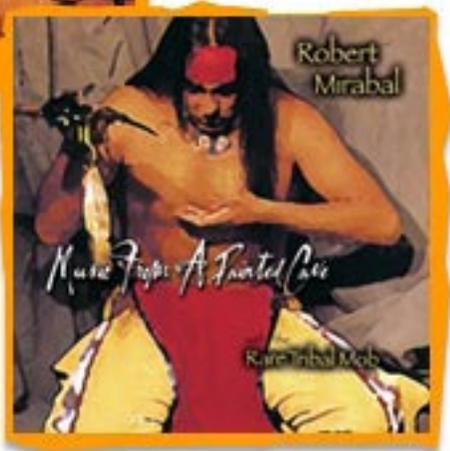


### Mary Youngblood

**"Walk With Me"** (CD: Beneath the Raven Moon)

Mary's CD, "Beneath the Raven Moon" was awarded the 2003 Grammy for best Native American Music Album. Her composition "Walk with Me" is a fascinating combination of Blues and Native American styles, and beautifully underscores the end of Spokane Garry's life, and the rise of white culture on the Northwest Plateau.

[www.silverwave.com](http://www.silverwave.com)



### Robert Mirabal

**"Painted Caves"** (CD: Music from a Painted Cave)

First featured in a nationally broadcast PBS special of his work, Roberts composition "Painted Caves", launches a presentation of Plateau culture in "Two Rivers". It is a lovely evocation of the spirit and the poetry of ancient Native Americans, and dramatizes the sense of family and community Native people value so highly.

[www.silverwave.com](http://www.silverwave.com)

### Golden Eagle

**"Original Music"** (CD: Golden Eagle)

Golden Eagle is an authentic Plateau Indian drum group, formed by members of the lukes family to preserve and present Plateau style drum music, and performs regularly in powwows across the country. Recorded specifically for the film, Golden Eagle's drum compositions underscore the strength and spirit of Plateau culture, and infuses "Two Rivers" with the energy, power, and vitality of Plateau Indian life.

## Contact



Greenleaf Street's mission is to serve as a voice for ideas, history, people, groups, and communities that have something to offer society, and need to be heard.

**Rodney Mitchell**  
(Producer)

19946 Lubao Place  
Chatsworth CA 91311

818-363-1477

[info@greenleafstreet.com](mailto:info@greenleafstreet.com)