



Nature's Leading Women

NURTURING A GLOBAL SISTERHOOD OF CONSERVATION LEADERS

Across every country in the world, women are the primary resource managers—whether that means meal planning and grocery shopping; planting and harvesting crops; or gathering water and firewood. Women also utilize, understand, and interact with nature and natural resources differently than men; in coastal and marine areas, for example, women typically harvest crabs, shellfish, and other marine life near the shoreline. Meanwhile, men—who often control household finances—load boats, gather nets and head further out to sea.

A growing body of scientific evidence makes it clear: Women have a uniquely vital role to play in the pursuit of healthy communities, sustainable economies, thriving nature and a liveable climate.

Increasing women's leadership creates a win-win. Incorporating their distinctive experiences, perspectives and feedback creates more sustainable, transformative climate and conservation decisions. At the same time, women gain greater agency, employment opportunities and are better able to plan for their families, all of which strengthens community resilience.

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Addressing gender inequity requires us to be intentional. It won't happen by itself or on the sidelines. We have the evidence, from carbon to conservation, that results will be better if we consider gender.

—Robyn James
Lead author of [*When solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises ignore gender, they harm society and the planet*](#) and TNC's Director of Gender and Equity, Asia Pacific Region

Above: Members of Mangoro Market Meri, or Mangrove Market Women, a conservation-focused initiative in Papua New Guinea initially conceived at the 2017 convening of Nature's Leading Women. © Robyn James/TNC

THAT'S WHY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY CONVENED NATURE'S LEADING WOMEN.

Scheduled for early December 2024 in Cavanbah (Byron Bay) on Arakwal Country, NSW, Australia, Nature's Leading Women will gather conservation-minded women from across Asia Pacific to:

- Grow a movement of women leading conservation and climate action.
- Actively connect women leaders to each other to influence climate and conservation policies and funding.
- Provide women with the support and resources they need to build and lead their own solutions.

The official kickoff for the convening will be a weekend of celebrating women, art and conservation at the [11th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art \(APT11\)](#), the flagship series showcasing contemporary art by artists from across the region to an international audience.

Hosted by Queensland Art Gallery-Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), curators commissioned KAWAKI, a women's network in the Solomon Islands, to create an exhibit for APT11. KAWAKI's connection to Nature's Leading Women is particularly special; since the founding group of four women came together at the inaugural 2017 convening, the network, created to connect conservation, community and culture across the Solomon Islands, has grown to more than 400 women.

NURTURING NATURE'S LEADERS

We're committed to creating a meaningful, multi-day learning and leadership experience in December 2024 for as many as 40 women hailing from Asia Pacific and beyond. We will use this convening to keep building a movement for women's leadership in climate and conservation policy and action. Your ongoing support will help us meet that goal—and make tangible progress in our efforts to build a global conservation movement shaped by women's voices, influenced by their needs and committed to leadership in climate.



To **SUPPORT** or **ATTEND** Nature's Leading Women and/or learn more about TNC's gender-focused research, contact:

ROBYN JAMES

Director of Gender and Equity
Asia Pacific Region, TNC



To **EXPLORE** conservation partnership opportunities, contact:

CRYSTAL DIAZ DE VILLEGAS

Director of Engagement
and Efficiency
Chief Conservation Office, TNC



Hear from women at the inaugural [Nature's Leading Women 2017](#) convening, including Melissa Wurrumarrba, who became the first university graduate from her Ngukurr community in 30 years, thanks to the [Wuyagiba Study Hub](#), a two-way learning exchange with Sydney's Macquarie University. The idea for the exchange was conceived at the 2017 convening.



To **VOLUNTEER** your time and efforts to planning and help make Nature's Leading Women a success, contact:

PHILIPPA MCKAY

DEI Coordinator
Asia Pacific Region, TNC

Above: Members of KAWAKI at the inaugural Nature's Leading Women in 2017. © Robyn James/TNC

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SCIENCE DEMANDS MORE WOMEN IN CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE

As people everywhere navigate a rapidly changing climate and accelerated species loss, Robyn James, TNC's Director of Gender and Equity for the Nature's Leading Women Asia Pacific Region, urges us to recognize a singular, fact: **These intertwined global crises are not gender neutral.**

Her latest research¹, [*When solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises ignore gender, they harm society and the planet*](#), highlights up to 80 percent of all people displaced by climate change and biodiversity loss are women and girls. However, when it comes to power and decision-making, women are still in the minority: less than 15 percent of environmental ministers and less than 25 percent of the most cited climate scientists are women.

When women remain underrepresented—or entirely absent—they are unable to directly influence decision making, design, and deployment of solutions to the biodiversity and climate crises that directly impact them. That absence can also lead to on-the-ground inequity and failure of large-scale carbon and conservation projects.

Research shows that market-based solutions, including carbon and biodiversity offsets, primarily benefit men in high-income countries, while largely ignoring and minimizing the rights, interests and lives of women, especially in low-income countries. The exclusion of women also significantly slows progress in solving the very crises market-based solutions are intended to resolve.

Nature's Leading Women was convened to help reset and realign this reality. It will take a deliberate and sustained investment of money, time and resources to address deep disparities and gender-based injustice. That's why the 2024 convening is prioritizing connecting conservation-minded women to financial resources and training. Women have told TNC what they need: capacity, influence and access to ongoing financing, guidance and support.

That's what Nature's Leading Women will provide. For more information, contact [Robyn James](#).



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Right now, women are largely invisible in not only the systems perpetuating climate change and biodiversity loss, but also the spaces leading to the solutions. We have some recommendations, and a few radical suggestions, about how to fix that.

—Robyn James
Director of Gender and Equity
Asia Pacific Region, TNC

Above: Robyn James seen in D'Aguilar National Park, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. © Annette Ruzicka

¹ [Market-based Climate Mitigation and Biodiversity Conservation Solutions Must Consider Gender](#); TNC Cool Green Science, Cara Cannon Byington

Nature's Leading Women 2024:

HIGH LEVEL AGENDA

The 11th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT 11)

Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Meanjin / Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Date	Overview	Details
Saturday 30 th November to Sunday 1 st December	APT 11 Opening Weekend	KAWAKI from Solomon Islands: artwork, commissioned by QAGOMA and designed in collaboration with the youth-led Dreamcast Theatre
Monday 2 nd December (morning)	APT 11 Symposium	KAWAKI and other women partners attending the NLW convening at this invite-only event held by QAGOMA

Nature's Leading Women 2 Convening

Crystalbrook Byron, Cavanbah / Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia

Date	Overview	Details
Monday 2 nd December (afternoon)	Move from APT 11 in Meanjin to NLW Convening in Cavanbah	Women partners attend the NLW convening will travel to Crystalbrook Byron in Cavanbah / Byron Bay. A smoking ceremony led by Indigenous Custodians of Bundjalung Country and time to share a meal and stories will set the tone for the week ahead.
Tuesday 3 rd to Thursday 5 th December	NLW Convening	Sessions exploring culture, conservation and storytelling, sharing learnings around sustainable resourcing and financing, and themes of feminist leadership will be interspersed with field trips to conservation projects led by women and Indigenous communities in the local area.
Friday 6 th December	Roundtable	Whole day roundtable with donors and partners.
Saturday 7 th December	Final Event	'Celebrating Women Leaders in Conservation' to share outcomes from the NLW convening and roundtable announce next steps for building a movement for change.