

## **Update on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Keynote Conversation**

*From the faculty, staff, and trustees of the Conway School*

To our colleagues, partners of the Conway School, and our extended community:

**We are writing to let you know that we have decided to cancel the Keynote Conversation with Winona LaDuke, which was scheduled for May 11.**

Thank you for joining us for our 50th Anniversary celebration this year. We are reconnecting with old friends and building relationships with new ones as we revisit our past, examine the present, and explore how the role of ecological design and planning is changing. This is exactly what we set out to do, and we're delighted that so many people have chosen to participate.

In the final months of our 50th year, we are focusing on the future of both the school and the field at large. We were excited when Winona LaDuke accepted our invitation to join us as we reflect on the question: *What Is the Land Asking of Us?* Ms. LaDuke's decades-long career of advocacy for environmental and indigenous rights and land protection resonates strongly with Conway's mission. We felt she would bring a valuable voice to the conversation and lift our community to action.

Late last week, Ms. LaDuke resigned as Executive Director of Honor the Earth, following a Minnesota court decision finding that Honor the Earth repeatedly failed to address staffing issues involving significant, long-running sexual harassment. Ms. LaDuke has taken responsibility for these failures. We believe that Ms. LaDuke's participation on May 11th would distract from and overshadow the intended conversation about the future role of the school and the field of ecologically and socially responsible design.

Although we are not moving forward with this specific event, the question remains: *What Is the Land Asking of Us?* We are working to develop a discussion on this important topic. We continue to honor our commitment to embodied teaching and to the support, health, and safety of the school and its community. We will continue to update you as those preparations take place; we reiterate our immense gratitude to everyone in the Conway ecosystem for your love and support throughout this celebratory 50th Anniversary year.

*April 14, 2023*