In her talk, Elizabeth Furse will discuss general fundamentals of Indian affairs public policies that include treaties, land, and natural resource management and the importance to American Indian and Alaska Native communities. In the era of self-determination of Indian nations, she will share her perspective of the role of science and research, and the need for scientists as they relate to the environmental health and well-being of American Indian/Alaska Native communities towards eliminating health disparities and improving the quality of life for tribal people.

Born a British subject in Nairobi, Kenya, Furse became an anti-apartheid activist, an advocate for migrant farmworkers and Native Americans, and a founder of a peace institute. Furse directed the successful restoration of four of Oregon’s terminated tribes before claiming an elected office in 1992. Furse represented Oregon’s 1st Congressional District in the U.S. Congress for three terms. She created the House Congressional Diabetes Caucus which has increased research dollars for the disease. After retiring from Congress, Furse served as the Director of the Institute for Tribal Government in the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University.

Currently, she is a small business owner and serves on the board of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Kah-Nee-Ta Resort, Water Watch Oregon, and Tamaslikt Museum on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.