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must go before it's gone. And, if someone's getting in the way of that glorious mission to get that gold or that oil or that molybdenum, well, they need to be neutralized. That's pretty much all there is to it.

Our own resources are extremely limited, so we can't do as much as we should be doing, but we're telling every story that we can with the goal of educating the public and providing journalistic support to the frontlines that others ignore. Somebody's gotta do it.

S.Q.: *What can people do to help?*

J.S.: Aside from educating ourselves, it would be great if we all became more active in our own communities and in solidarity with all indigenous peoples. Clicking "like" on Facebook or signing an online petition, while admirable, doesn't accomplish anything on the ground. We need to go to protests, volunteer our time, donate strategically – when we can afford to donate – to those who need it, host film screenings, start our own debate clubs, confront racism when we encounter it, and do anything else that might make a real difference in the world.

S.Q.: *What are some of the challenges at IC?*

J.S.: Funding has been a massive challenge for us. Despite the fact that we run circles around many other media outlets in terms of scope, we've never been able to secure a single grant or get support from any private foundation in Canada or the U.S. We've also had a big problem finding trustworthy volunteers to help share the burden, so to speak. Plus, journalists aren't usually willing to work for free, so we're forced to skip a lot of important stories.

S.Q.: *Are you currently recruiting more writers? Where do you need them the most?*

J.S.: We're always looking for more writers, no matter where they are in the world. They just have to be cool with the fact that we are not your average media outlet. We are ethical to the core, we deeply respect those we work with, we don't abuse words and we don't compromise.

S.Q.: *What's next for IC?*

J.S.: We've got tons of great stuff going on. We're working with the Indigenous Governance Program (IGOV) at the University of Victoria to publish a magazine called "Everyday Acts of Resurgence." We're developing an online cultural exchange to support indigenous youth on reserve. We're designing an online "indigenous journalism" course and an "ethical journalist" checklist. We're also searching frantically for operational funds so that we can carry this work forward, start paying our staff, expand our coverage and fairly compensate our contributors. We got a lot of work ahead of us.

"We're telling every story that we can with the goal of educating the public and providing journalistic support to the frontlines that others ignore. Somebody's gotta do it."

**JOHN AHNI
SCHERTOW**

WATER FEUD, from page 10

have historically known – and currently know – this land as their usual and accustomed grounds for hunting, fishing and gathering."

On June 22 seven companies, representing half of the Lower Willamette Group, filed a legal dispute with the EPA, challenging the projected cost of their clean-up plan.

Since the plan was announced the Portland Business Alliance has also launched a website, "Healthy River Healthy Economy," that warns "an overly expensive cleanup could hurt small businesses and cost hundreds of jobs each year," based on a 2012 economic impact study.

However, a 2012 economic analysis by ECONorthwest showed that fixing the Willamette would actually stimulate the local economy, as it would force giant companies like Exxon and Shell to spend millions of dollars in Portland that would not otherwise be spent here at all. According to their analysis, that money would also re-circulate as Superfund employees and their suppliers spend their income in the local economy. On the whole, the study predicted that a \$573 million clean up would produce \$980 million in spending in the Portland area, and would employ about 1,000 people over seven years.

The preferred alternative of Yakama Nation and its allies – a modified Option G – has a cost about three times as high, with commensurate benefits for job growth, local spending, and tax revenue.

Compared to other infrastructure projects, that cost does not seem extraordinarily high. In 2011, the City of Portland completed the "Big Pipe Project", spending \$1.4 billion on a sewer system upgrade so that less raw sewage would get dumped into the Willamette River. Option G, the one option that would protect the human rights of all river users, costs roughly the same amount.

Bob Sallinger of the Portland Audubon Society, says city officials have simply gotten too cozy with the Lower Willamette Group and are not demanding that polluters pay for a clean river in the same way that taxpayers have paid for The Big Pipe project.

The city is a member of the Lower Willamette Group and has been identified as among the potentially responsible parties.

"The city has a very, very pivotal role to play in what kind of plan is adopted," said Sallinger. "Part of the adoption criteria for

"Fishing isn't just a right on paper for us, it's a part of who we are and how we live. This plan does not go far enough to protect the waters and fish, and therefore violates the treaty that reserves our right to a meaningful fishery where we can harvest healthy fish that are safe to eat. Our expectation is that the EPA will revise this plan to protect our people, our fish, and our way of life."

**- VIRGIL LEWIS
YAKAMA TRIBAL COUNCIL**



PHOTO BY ROSE LONGORIA

Yakama leaders traveled to Washington D.C. earlier this week to argue their treaty rights with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, third from left. Pictured, left to right: Davis Washines, Yakama Nation General Council chairman, Delano Saluskin, Yakama Nation Tribal Council vice-chairman, Gina McCarthy, Gerald Lewis, Yakama Nation Tribal Council's Fish and Wildlife committee chairman, and Virgil Lewis, Yakama Nation Tribal Council's Law and Order committee chairman.

the plan is the consideration of local acceptance, which includes both the community and the local government. So the city has a formal role to play in either agreeing or disagreeing with the plan."

The city of Portland has a standing policy of consulting with local Native American tribes on a government-to-government basis before taking any action that could impact them – a policy implemented in 2012 through the now defunct Office of Healthy Working Rivers, which was eliminated when Charlie Hales took office as mayor. The mayor's office is currently hiring a liaison to coordinate this consultation.

During last year's conflict over a

proposed propane export terminal at the Port of Portland, renowned indigenous legal scholar Walter Echo-Hawk spoke to members of the Planning and Sustainability Commission at PSU's Native American Student Center about why and how the city should continue to consult with tribes.

Echo-Hawk's 2013 book "In The Light of Justice," explains how these government duties dovetail with international human rights treaties like the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 2007 U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the U.S. has supported since 2010. This declaration, he writes, creates new legal

obligations for states while clarifying the meaning and interpretation of treaty rights in a manner favorable to indigenous nations. For instance, Articles 20, 28 and 32 of the Indigenous Rights Declaration require that governments provide redress for "harm to subsistence rights, lands, territories and resources." Specific provisions of this declaration, Echo-Hawk writes, "can be enforced by courts to the extent they reflect customary international law or existing treaty obligations."

He concludes: "Just as modern nations have renounced torture, genocide, piracy, slavery, and cruel and unusual punishment in the world today, the human rights of indigenous peoples will be restored by nations primarily because it is the right thing to do in the post-colonial age."

"Fishing isn't just a right on paper for us, it's a part of who we are and how we live" says Virgil Lewis, a member of the Yakama Tribal Council. "This plan does not go far enough to protect the waters and fish, and therefore violates the treaty that reserves our right to a meaningful fishery where we can harvest healthy fish that are safe to eat. Our expectation is that the EPA will revise this plan to protect our people, our fish and our way of life. In doing so, the general population of the region will also benefit as will the economy."

NAYA's Roben White argues that the city should formally request an additional 120 days of public comments so that NAYA and other communities have time to fully respond to the problems in the EPA's plan and involve both youth and elders who want to be part of the river's restoration.

"The city has an obligation to do what's right here," White says. "We're just trying to live the American dream and eat food that doesn't poison us."