Water and the Indigenous Women's Leadership Project

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Over the weekend of March 21st through the 23rd, 2008, a group of indigenous women, and two male "firekeepers" who tended the ceremonial fire for the women, gathered at the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca in the state of Minnesota. The weekend was particularly significant to the women because they planned to perform a renewal ceremony for the spring equinox on that Friday March 21st. On Saturday March 22nd they would offer a water healing ceremony for global waters in response to the United Nation's annual recognition of World Water Day (UNCED, 2010).

The gathering at Lake Itasca was organized in response to instructions given by several Ojibwe and Anishinawbe M'dewiwin (Grand Medicine Society) spiritual leaders in Minnesota and Canada. These women believe that it is necessary for native women, traditionally the caretakers of water for their tribes, to draw attention to the increasing pollution and lack of accessibility to fresh water resources throughout the world (Susskind, 2008; UNEP GEMS, 2008; UNEP, 2010).

Through the collaborative efforts and the support of the Indigenous Peoples Task Force (IPTF) in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the women involved that weekend represented indigenous nations from the United States, Canada, and Mexico, including the Anishinawbe, Dakota, Lakota, Ojibwe, Sioux, and Yaqui, just to name a few. They met for the very first time as a group to officially launch the Indigenous Women's Leadership Project (hereafter "the Project").

The goal of the Project is to develop and encourage environmental leadership among indigenous women and girls to protect water resources. The Project is an ongoing case study that offers education on environmental leadership by integrating indigenous cultural and spiritual practice at its core. The weekend gathering was an ambitious undertaking that included plans for activities that integrated spiritual and ceremonial participation along with classroom sessions devoted to lessons on indigenous knowledge systems, sacred lands, water, public policy, and environmental leadership.

It was essential that the Project convene in a location that was accessible for the invited participants. A conscious effort was made to include those who could not otherwise afford to travel out of the area and to account for those who did not have reliable transportation. The Project was able to use the housing and classroom facilities for the weekend at the University of Minnesota's research facilities at the Lake Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories. This location in northern Minnesota provided easy access for a majority of the participants who lived either on or near one of the several reservations in the region. The location also provided a shorter travel distance for those who came from Canada, and it was close enough for individuals who decided to drive the five hours from the Minneapolis area. Because the research facility is designed for both long term immersed classroom instruction and research, the classrooms and housing lodges were comfortable and even included internet access despite the remote location.

It is important to note here that the author has had significant experience being involved in public governmental consultation processes and is knowledgeable of methods that lead to active and valid participant involvement. It was because of this background that the author wanted to hold the inaugural meeting of the Project in the Lake Itasca vicinity where native

elders and spiritual leaders from the region could easily attend the weekend events without difficulty. This attempt for inclusion of indigenous peoples in other types of meetings, such as governmental land management decisions, is quite often not made and there is frequently a lack of consideration for native involvement and resources. This can be problematic especially when the decisions that are being made in such meetings might have a direct impact on tribes and their reservation lands, and their voices go left unheard (USEPA, 2002; Wild & McLeod, 2008; NRLC, 2003; Rivers & Constable, 2001). Since the Project is designed as an ongoing case study, it is essential that attempts be made to include as many women as possible who want to learn more about how to become further involved in environmental leadership for their tribes and communities. There will be periodic follow-up meetings in the future so it is essential that there be a significant number of participants to revisit in case some of them decide to drop out at some point.

Sacred Water

In February 2006, at the biannual meeting of the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), members of the organization's Commission on Sacred Sites and Burial Places drafted a resolution to be presented at the United Nations in support of the then-Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that, at the time, was being considered by the Human Rights Commission for advancement and formal adoption by the General Assembly. The resolution stated that we need to

Volume 2 - June - 2011Protect and preserve sacred places such as those connected to the earth, wind, water, fire, plants, animals including the womb of the woman and the birthing places of all female nations . . . from disturbance, development and destruction" (2006).

Discussions at the IITC meeting on the sacred nature of water focused on concerns about water quality and the protection of all life in or around existing water bodies (Ornelas, 2006). The women at the Minnesota meeting were equally concerned as they were aware that all lakes known to have been tested in Minnesota, for example, presented unhealthy levels of lead, mercury, and other pollutants. This disturbing fact had a great impact on the women who are gravely concerned by the potential ill effects of fish consumption and the health and welfare of their children and elder relatives. As a result of such toxic water environments, cultural and spiritual ceremonial practices involving water, the consumption of fish, plants, and animals gathered or taken near such water bodies are being compromised. Food consumption practices have been altered to accommodate those who might be particularly vulnerable to the presence of unacceptable toxin levels and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the water (Foushee & Gurneau, 2010). POPs consist of

[L]ong-lived chemicals that build up in the food chain and slowly poison animals and humans. POPs travel thousands of miles and enter the soil, oceans, rivers, plants, and animals far from where they are produced or used. Indigenous peoples who maintain a land-based culture can be heavily exposed to POPs from their diet ... most well-known examples of POPs are PCBs [Polychlorinated biphenyls]

Volume 2 – June - 2011 (transformer fluids), dichlor-diphenyl-trichlorethylene DDT (a pesticide) and dioxin, an unwanted byproduct of manufacturing and one of the most toxic manmade substances known. Historical tribal hunting and fishing rights are undermined by POPs contamination. Dioxin, PCBs, DDT and nine other chemicals are considered to be 'a serious threat to human health' throughout the world by the United Nations (CERD 2008, p. 49).

While these types of pollutants are having a disproportionate detrimental effect on the health, culture, and values of indigenous peoples, there is hope that by raising awareness in endeavors such as the Project and the IPTF, that the healing and cleansing of our waters can and will inevitably occur. In her book *Grandmothers Counsel the World*, Schaffer (2006) wrote that "prayer can heal the pollution in the waters. The Grandmothers pray every day for the waters of the Earth to become purified again" (Schaffer, 2006, p. 148). Likewise, Enoye, writing for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) symposium on *Conserving Cultural and Biological Diversity: The Role of Sacred Natural Sites* described that

Water is a dimension within which I can travel literally and metaphorically. Prayers and messages can be carried in water and I know spirits bringing blessings can come from water, often in the form of rain. In a spiritual sense water can be a sacred space as well as a sacred place. Water delivers and carries away, from the sky and from the earth. Water is in our breath, blood, saliva and mother's milk. Water is the conduit for sending offerings, and for many believers water carries us back to our elemental beginning (2005, p. 109).

On a global scale, women and children are the most impacted by the growing lack of water resources (Common Dreams, 2010; Susskind, 2008; UN Water, 2006). They experience a disproportionate workload in order to find water for everyday living and economic needs. With lingering droughts worldwide, and growing polluted water resources, it is getting more and more difficult to find drinkable water. Because of this growing lack of water, women and children must spend more time out of their days trying to locate and carry water. Consequently, women are being kept from their other productive daily activities. And children are being kept from school to help with the household and economic demand to find water. (Acreman, 2004; Boelens, Chiba, & Nakashima, 2006). In *Water and Ethics*, Acreman (2004) wrote that

Women are also the main care providers, thus sickness in the family due to contaminated water impacts on women more severely than on men. In some households, children are involved in water collection and have insufficient time for school (p.7).

For the indigenous women who have been involved with the Project, they have discussed quite openly that their way of life is compromised by polluted water and shrinking water resources. Ceremonies that include fish to be eaten by participants cannot be fully enjoyed by children, the elderly and pregnant women because of mercury and other chemicals known to be in the water and the fish. Other food sources, including medicinal plants near contaminated waters are avoided. And it is because of these constraints that several of the women in the Project felt that it

Volume 2 - June - 2011was important for them to become involved and to learn what they could do about these problems in the future.

Research Methods

Throughout the course of the Project, research has been conducted via ethnographic participant observation. Evaluative questionnaires were given to the 41 participants at the end of the 2008 conference to get feedback about individual experiences and perceptions. Follow-up interviews were conducted with several participants in 2009 and 2010. The follow-up interviews were conducted with participants in order to learn whether or not the lessons and experiences from the 2008 conference had made a lasting impact. Were they involved in environmental leadership activities? If so, how were they putting the lessons they had learned to work for them and/or their communities?

There was a wide range of environmental leadership life experience among the participants ranging from mothers and housewives with no experience to environmental activists who are involved in ongoing leadership activities. Among the active environmental activists was Canadian Anishinawbe spiritual leader Josephine Mandamin. She was recently featured in the documentary film *Waterlife* (McLaughlin, K. et al., 2009) that highlights her Mother Earth Water Walk campaign (2011). The film interweaves Mandamin's walk around the five Great Lakes while the filmmakers discuss the declining water quality of the lakes. Mandamin is continuing to be unstoppable in her quest to educate and to heal the waters of the world. She kicked off the 2011 Mother Earth Water Walk on April 10, 2011. This time Mandamin's ambitious effort

Volume 2 – June - 2011 includes a national water walk of four groups of walkers. All groups are scheduled to meet at Bad River, WI by June 12^{th} for a national healing of the waters ceremony.

Two other participants, who will remain anonymous, have taken life changing paths since the 2008 conference. One of the women has been working on an annual environmental justice summit and water ceremony that integrates indigenous spiritual practice with education and programming for youth about the environment. This is a community event that welcomes participants to contribute and share their personal experiences while also learning of ways to protect the environment. Children are invited from community schools to participate, as well as other members from the surrounding communities.

A third woman has returned to her reservation and has conducted her own water walk to raise awareness about the unsafe water conditions there. When she first arrived back to her reservation she wrote in an email

Many families are effected [sic] by the contamination such that there [sic] are unable to drink any water from their taps out of fear of the E-coli bacteria. This has been on-going for the past several months. I visited my mother two days ago and saw this situation first hand. She has been drinking bottled water from the one gallon plastic jugs that have been provided by the _____ Tribe, which is a very good thing. But I am still concerned about the water in those plastic jugs after all the training I've been through last year on bottled water contaminants. We are all busy, I know, and we must all pick our battles each day as we arise for work. Yet, in this work, is there room to help support an effort that will shed light upon an on-going battle to have safe drinking water *Volume 2 – June - 2011* in our Native communities? I propose that we sponsor a Water Walk here in _____ not only to show support for our sisters in Canada but to also bring attention to what is happening right in our own backyards (personal communication, March 3, 2009).

The third participant continues to live on her reservation and she is actively involved in community education to clean up water resources and the environment there. She has developed tribe specific education for school aged children on her reservation. As she described in her email, she is well aware of the types of contaminants that are found in bottled water. Many people do not realize that the bottled water industry is unregulated per se; unlike regular tap water in the United States that is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

By travelling and living with the various women who have become involved in the Project over the years, it is clear that there are a lot of advantages to being actively engaged in the daily activities with the participants. There was some reticence early on about "an academic" wanting to work with them. But over time, the women have come to view my participation as a valued asset. My own life experience is a gift that I can offer in return for their involvement with the Project. It is a two way street. As it should be.

Indigenous Women and Leadership

Native American history is filled with accounts of women holding positions of power and leadership within their tribes. The recently deceased Wilma Mankiller, the former Chief of Cherokee Nation, and Winona LaDuke, a former Vice Presidential candidate, prolific scholar and environmental justice advocate, are just a couple of indigenous women leaders many of us

Volume 2 – June - 2011 recognize by name today. They have blazed trails for indigenous women who have too often been relegated into the "borderlands" (Anzaldua, 1987) where they have been disregarded in a modern day society that still struggles with open racism and overt hostility against indigenous peoples at large. As Anzaldua (1987) wrote

To live in the Borderlands means knowing

that the india [Indian] in you, betrayed by 500 years,

is no longer speaking to you (p. 194).

To live everyday with an underlying current of societal violence on too many levels, the silenced voices of those most needing to be heard are often missing in public debates. As native families have been disrupted by the relocation policies of the United States over the past 200 years, their cultural and spiritual practices became outlawed or were relegated to insignificance by early, mostly Christian, colonizers to the New World (Deloria, 2006; DESA, 2009; LaDuke, 2005; Gunn Allen, 2008; Kidwell, Noley, and Tinker, 2002 [2001]). For many indigenous women, this meant that the cultural and spiritual practices that were a significant part of their daily lives were diminished or absolutely forbidden. However, there is a growing trend today for many indigenous women to reclaim their historical roles to strengthen their own family dynamics and to help build sustainable futures for their tribal communities. The word sustainable is used here to broadly define support for the environment, culture, spirituality, and indigenous knowledge systems that will enliven community health physically, mentally, as well as emotionally in order to continue to thrive.

For Sharon Day, the Executive Director of the IPTF, her daily work is strengthened by her connection to her own cultural traditions and spirituality as an Ojibwe community and

spiritual leader. She recognizes the strength gained from those personal practices that are at the heart of her relationship with her own native community, and the relationships she maintains with non indigenous individuals and organizations in her work life. After several meetings between this author and Day and others at the IPTF, it was decided that the Project would merge resources with them in order to realize our common goals of developing the environmental leadership potential of indigenous women. Thus began our plans in the fall of 2007 to develop a conference with a particular focus on water, environmental leadership, and indigenous women's spiritual practice and water ceremonies.

For the Seventh Generation

As the Project participants arrived at the Lake Itasca site that weekend in March 2008, they were each assigned lodgings and given a schedule of planned events. With every new arrival, the women welcomed each other and began to talk amongst themselves about the weekend. They knew that the topic of water and environmental leadership was something they were all excited to learn more about.

The attendance of several Ojibwa and Anishinawbe M'dewiwin spiritual leaders demonstrated to the other participants how significant the proceedings would be. A central code of the cultural and spiritual responsibility of the M'dewiwins is to minister to the health of the water. Historically, this is a very similar role that indigenous women have responsibility for in many tribes in the United States, as well as internationally. The M'dewiwin women would be

conducting the renewal ceremony on the spring equinox and the water healing ceremony in observance of World Water Day on March 22nd. The recognition of World Water Day began as an international initiative during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that was held in Rio de Janeiro (IRC, 2010). Based on that initiative, the United Nations General Assembly eventually adopted a resolution in 1993 that designated March 22nd as World Water Day.

The M'dewiwins live their lives in active daily observance of what is known by many indigenous tribes to be the Natural Law "with their eyes on the time horizon of seven generations to come" (Ausebel, 2008, p. xxi-xxii). As it was discussed earlier, M'dewiwin elder Josephine Mandamin has made it her life goal to teach about the five Great Lakes and the polluted condition of global waters (McLaughlin, K., McMahon, M., Flahive, G., & McMahon, K., 2009; Mother Earth Walk, 2011). She was invited to conduct a classroom session on the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge systems with environmental leadership roles in personal life, as well as in work life situations. During the five plus years that it took Mandamin to walk the entirety of the Great Lakes, she experienced first hand the declining condition of the lakes as she walked and observed the shoreline. She also withstood taunts and jeers from passersby as she walked and prayed for the water. Her telling of these experiences allowed each of the participants to learn what it means to be a true environmental leader.

After dinner, to recognize the spring equinox in ceremony, all of the participants walked to a selected spot in a nearby clearing that was located on top of a small hill. As the group approached the clearing, they could see the flames of the ceremonial fire through the trees. It was

clear from the mood and the intention of the participants that this was a special time. The bright full moon glowed as a beacon in the night sky above them. The only two men invited to attend the weekend conference were the firekeepers. In the Ojibwe tradition, it is the role of the men to tend the ceremonial fires. Once the women arrived at the clearing, the men stepped away from the fire. They would only return if the fire needed to be tended. Prayers were offered that night to welcome the spring and to honor the renewal of life that the new season promised in the warmth of the fire and the songs that were sung in the ceremony.

The next morning all of the participants arose early to begin the water healing ceremony in observance of World Water Day. The participants, including the firekeepers, got into cars and vans and drove the three miles to the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca. A short walk down a winding path led the group to the still snow covered shore of the lake and the exact spot where the water from Lake Itasca begins to pour into the stream that eventually becomes the largest river by volume in the United States.

During the water healing ceremony, water from the lake was offered to each person to drink from the river's source as part of the water blessing. The water was crystal clear and cold from the ice covered lake. The water was far cleaner than the water at the end of the river where it would eventually pour into the Gulf of Mexico. This is even truer today after the recent BP oil spill has caused catastrophic pollution at the river's end in the Gulf. There is no other place or time of year along the course of the Mississippi River, other than Lake Itasca, where the water is safe enough to drink. By the time the water reaches the Gulf, the water is highly polluted and toxic due to agricultural practices, industrial activity, and urban runoff upstream (NAS, 2008; UNEP, 2010).

The young girls in attendance that weekend paid close attention to their relatives and to the ceremonies that were being conducted. This is one of the goals of the Project and the IPTF, to teach indigenous cultural and spiritual traditions to insure that they would continue to be passed on through the generations.

Following the water healing ceremony, the group headed to a classroom setting. The Project presented elements of successful policy making practices, leadership goals, and strategies for becoming more involved in environmental management activities with regard to water on their reservations, local communities, urban centers, and within governmental settings. Mandamin talked about sustaining indigenous culture and spiritual practice as a way to achieve environmental justice. Later, many participants wrote comments on their evaluation sheets stating that they appreciated learning about both the indigenous and non indigenous ways of protecting the environment. One anonymous participant wrote in her evaluation of the weekend's teachings that she "Liked the opportunity to bridge issues of how to improve the state of our water with my indigenous cultural heritage." Based on similar comments from other participants and through classroom discussion periods, the following points were highlighted as ways to improve water policy goals that are inclusive of indigenous peoples

Effective Water Policy Needs To

1. Integrate indigenous cultures and values – Policy design must consider differing tribal cultural mores, regions, and values.

2. Invite community participation and collaboration (e.g., timely notifications for public meetings) – Outreach and invitations to tribes must be given in advance to allow

Volume 2 - June - 2011participants to become fully informed on the issues for effective contributions to be made during the policy making process.

3. Build consensus that is holistic – Policy must integrate regional concerns, cultural or spiritual significance (e.g., sacred lands, sacred water), gender roles, environment, pollution.

4. Be responsive to local concerns – Policy makers must consider local available water resources and quality. Deliberate fact finding sessions must reflect on possible positive or negative impacts on the local communities by maintaining proactive policy implementation efforts.

5. Provide information that can be used by everyone and not only made available on the internet (e.g., provide printed brochures) – Policy makers must consider that not all residents of a region own computers or even know how to use them. Policy makers must implement alternative means of communication delivery systems to residents.

When participants were asked how they might contribute to policy making, their comments

included the following

- I will take better care of the water in my life, including my own body.
- I will not be lazy and buy bottled water, I will always pack my own.
- I will email my friends/contacts information pertinent to saving and taking care of our water.
- Educate others.
- Get more family, friends and colleagues involved in government.
- Send more information to our tribal elected officials.
- Share this experience with men (Native men) so they can get past dominant society. ways of life and see what traditional way means to perseverance and survival.

- I'm going to start looking for committees which are committed to informing the public of the shortage of water in the future.
- I don't intend to take water for granted knowing that there are countries in the world that don't have drinking water.
- I'm going to share what I learned with my daughters.
- Information provided by Roxanne will help a lot to organize my thoughts and enable me to put them into action.
- I plan to become an active member of our local Watershed Committee.
- To continue my work with the Youth and Water Education.
- Maybe meet with other people about their concerns about water.
- Encourage more women to understand their responsibility for caring for the water many speak of the earth but lack understanding of the water.

The conversations about how to impact water policy were lively as people opened up and shared their personal views. There was a lot of laughter and joking around as individuals talked about their hopes for the future.

Human Rights and Indigenous Women

On September 13, 2007, the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to adopt the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hereafter "the Declaration"). Work on the Declaration had begun 30 years previous by indigenous peoples in the United States (Ornelas, 2007). The long process of eventually taking the Declaration to the United Nations brought together international populations of indigenous peoples from numerous countries that had previously not known about each other, let alone worked together for a common cause. Over the decades, and overcoming numerous setbacks, the Declaration finally reached the floor of the General Assembly and was adopted. While its acceptance was eventually celebrated by indigenous peoples around the world, there was great disappointment in the United States. The

Volume 2 - June - 2011passage of the Declaration was barely mentioned by the media in the United States; and the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand actually voted against it.

For those indigenous leaders in the United States who had worked on the Declaration since the beginning in the 1970s, it was a bitter disappointment to face the fact that, once again, the United States had refused to recognize the human rights and dignity of its indigenous populations. An example of some of the countries that did vote in favor of the Declaration includes Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Iran, Egypt, Germany, Turkey, and Yemen, just to name a few. A total of 143 countries voted in favor of adoption with 11 abstentions (UNGA, 2007).

There are 46 Articles described in the Declaration. Article 22 addresses indigenous women and children specifically. The Article states that

1. Particular attention shall be paid to the rights and special needs of indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities in the implementation of this Declaration.

2. States shall take measures, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, to ensure that indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

It is important to recognize the broad significance of this Article. It clearly states that women and children must have their "rights and special needs" protected. For indigenous women who are trying to sustain their cultural and spiritual traditions for their communities today, and for the

future generations, it is essential that they be supported to conduct their water ceremonies and to honor and practice their spiritual traditions in a way that is recognized by non indigenous peoples as legitimate.

In a United Nations report on *Gender and Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights* (UNPFII, 2009), it was described that

Often knowledge is gendered so men share with boys and women share with girls. Indigenous women also hold the keys to combating poverty in their communities and creating and implementing strategies for sustainable development together with indigenous men (p. 3).

Women's roles within indigenous societies have generally been discounted. Support for their social and political lives is clearly a human right as it is defined in the Declaration.

Following World War II, nations around the world organized to develop a universal statement on human rights. After the discovery of the atrocities committed during the war, it was believed that a unifying global document was needed to ensure that such atrocities as had been committed during the war would never occur again. Under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, who had been appointed to chair the committee that developed the first document for human rights in the modern era, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights containing 30 Articles was adopted by the newly formed United Nations on December 10, 1948 (Glendon, 2001). While the document boldly claims that it recognizes "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and world peace" (HRRC, no date), the United States has been slow to honor the spirit of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Volume 2 – June - 2011 Peoples. But in December 2010, the United States was the last of the hold outs and followed Australia, Canada, and New Zealand by finally agreeing to support the Declaration (USDOS, 2011). Time will tell how that support unfolds.

Envisioning the Future

The future of the Indigenous Women's Leadership Project is bright. Plans are underway to seek further financial support to sponsor another weekend conference to involve other indigenous women who might be interested in honing their environmental leadership skills. Past participants have indicated that they want to be involved again to share what they have been doing to protect the environment and water resources since our last meeting.

The goals of any project should be periodically reassessed in order to readjust in necessary ways and to plan for new developments as they arise. The IPTF has expressed an interest in collaborating with the Project once again in the future.

Over the three and half years since the Project began, several themes have risen to the surface in importance. There is no question that several of the 2008 conference participants got a lot of motivation to act for the protection of their environment where they live. Several urban residents have organized in their communities. Those who live on reservations have decided to not to sit by while their lands are being contaminated by health challenging bacteria and other pollutants. But what has stood out the most is the recognition that their culture and spiritual values do belong in their lives. In addition to the conference, the subsequent discussions that I have had with participants have shown me that the women remain inspired to act. As one participant wrote "I will be more active in local, national, international efforts to save and take

care of our water and bodies." It is important that the Project continues to support the work and commitment that indigenous women have to offer for the protection of the environment and their water resources.

It would be a major oversight to not mention the fact that on July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution stating that access to clean and safe drinking water is a human right (UN News, 2010). Could this be the next step leading to the formal adoption of a 31st Article to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? There is presently a global movement to add the 31st Article. It would be the first Article to be added since the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. The proposed Article states that

Everyone has the right to clean and accessible water, adequate for the health and well-being of the individual and family, and no one shall be deprived of such access or quality of water due to individual economic circumstance (Article 31, 2010).

And so it is through such promise that the Indigenous Women's Leadership Project will continue to work for the health of our global waters and for the human rights of the seventh generation from today.

*Ojibwe Water Song*¹

¹ This song is being used in this paper with permission given by an Ojibwe spiritual leader.

Volume 2 – June - 2011 niibii geezha gay e goo gee me-gwetch awayn nimigoo geezha wayn nimigoo

> water we love you we thank you we respect you

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