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### Working as Allies to Indigenous Peoples

#### Lessons learned working to support The Onondaga Nation, North America

Ongwawanna & NOON

June 13, 2012

New York City- On May 16, 2012 Neighbors of the Onondaga Nation (NOON) and the Syracuse Doctrine of Discovery StudyGroup made a presentation at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The presentation spoke about activities that have been undertaken to have the Doctrine of Discovery reversed.

Andy Mager and Sue Eiholzer opened with a power point presentation on NOON's Ally work. Sue Eiholzer reviewed past activities structured around NOON's goals of education, relationships, support, collaboration and advocacy. Integrating NOON's guiding principles with specific activities, she continued to discuss working toward building relationships of trust while respecting cultural differences, consulting when appropriate, committing long term, viewing the challenges realistically and having a clear understanding of our own values.



Sue Eiholzer commented on her work with the Nation, "It was enlightening as I prepared for the presentation to realize just how many activities NOON has done and is doing in our approximately a dozen years working as Ally."

Andy Mager, Syracuse Peace Council coordinator for NOON and the Two Row Wampum Campaign, focused on the upcoming Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign, a collaboration between NOON and the Onondaga Nation Council. The campaign, continuing through 2013, will commemorate the 400 Anniversary of Two Row Wampum Treaty. It will consist of educational programs throughout New York State on the treaty, the environment and the need to honor its meaning.



Andy spoke of the importance of honoring the Two Row Wampum, "The Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign is an exciting opportunity for NOON to work with others to bring the Onondaga call for justice, reconciliation and healing directly to the people of New York State. In doing so, we will call on our fellow citizens to demand that our governments uphold that treaties they have signed in our names."

The kick off, summer and final events of the Two Row Wampum Renewal Campaign are planned to be held in Syracuse. A major highlight will be a 12 day trip down the Hudson River in July/August. Canoes and sail boats will enact and give visibility to the Two Row by moving side-by-side down the river from Albany to New York City with stops for events along the way. Plans include attending the UN Indigenous Peoples Day and a major event in NYC at the end to the 12 days.

Jake Edwards spoke about NOON's beginnings and justifiable Onondaga concerns about our intent and trustworthiness. His comments of appreciation for NOON's work were greatly appreciated.

In discussing the meaning of the Two Row, Jake Edwards reminded us, "That the treaty is in effect 'as long as the grass is green, the sun rises in the east and set in the west and water flows

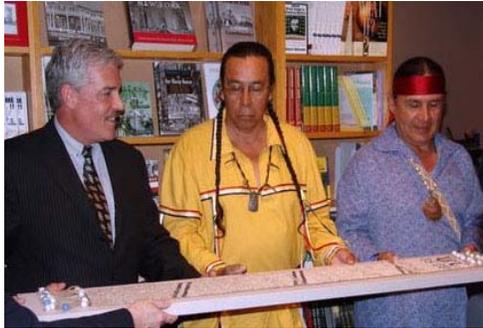


downhill.”

The panel continued with Dr. Philip Arnold of the Doctrine of Discovery Study Group. Dr. Philip Arnold is an Associate Professor of Indigenous Religions and interim Director of Native American



Studies at Syracuse University. He began by reflecting on his own history of learning about the Doctrine at a 2005 Permanent Forum Presentation and its being referenced subsequently in an Oneida court case. These two experiences lead to the founding of the study group. As well as, bringing noted speakers in the field to SU and LeMoyné, Dr. Arnold and Dr. MacDonald have spoken at academic conferences world-wide on the Doctrine. The challenge of convincing white people of the lie of Christian privilege is a daunting task but Dr. Arnold offered two paths. First, this belief is in opposition to the genuine message of Jesus Christ. Second, Indigenous values offer a model for survival on Mother Earth especially for students seeking a path to their future.



Dr. MacDonald, Professor of History of Religions at Le Moyné College, shared the study group's beginnings 5 years ago to discuss books, articles and various other materials or lectures attended. The support and understandings gained from each other in discussion helps to understand the struggles and hopes of indigenous peoples. Just a few of the books read and discussed are *Paradigm Wars* (2006) edited by Jerry Mander and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, *Original Instructions* (2008), edited by Melissa K. Nelson, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* by Charles Mann, Steve Newcomb's *Pagans in the Promised Land* (2008), and sections of Walter Echo-Hawk's *In the Courts of*

*the Conqueror*. *Indian Country Today* is a source of articles on what is happening across Indian country and what unites indigenous communities. In addition people world wide share information and discussion through the listserv. The group's web site ([doctrineofdiscovery.org](http://doctrineofdiscovery.org)) offers a reading list, current development updates, and list of local event. She reflected on the risk of alienating students when she teaches the subject. Imparting information and encouraging reflection without demonizing is a challenge.

Frieda Jacques ended the panel with reflections on the Doctrine of Discovery and the importance of studying and understanding its impact past and present. She also acknowledged the importance of the work being done by the Study Group.

Approximately 50 people from around the world, included a dozen or more Central New Yorkers, attended and offered very positive feedback and interest regarding the presentation and the work of both groups. Everyone involved in the presentation considered it a great success.

