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# Native American Rights Fund

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October 17, 1986

*Received*

*Oct. 20, 1986*

Rick Hill  
Gordie McLester ✓  
Francis Skenandore

Dear Folks:

At our post-negotiating meeting meeting (got that?) on September 23, we talked about how to put together your presentation on land acquisition to be made at the next negotiating meeting. Essentially, our task is to discover and write out the Wisconsin Oneidas' interests, priorities and needs with respect to land. All the information is in the Oneidas' heads and hearts. We need to get that information out and put it on paper. I think Jack Campisi can help us do that.

Jack is trained as an anthropologist in doing field work, i.e. eliciting cultural information. He can employ that technique here. By interviewing community leaders and some randomly selected community members, he can find out with precision the information you need for the land acquisition presentation. For instance, Jack could inquire about Wisconsin and New York land specifically, priorities in terms of land use, whether the land should be placed in trust, etc.

In addition, there is probably some helpful information already in the tribe's files. Jack can visit the relevant offices - e.g., realty office, tribal planning, etc. - to collect available data. That data, together with the interview results, would greatly assist the committee in preparing its land acquisition presentation.

In my opinion, Jack is the best person to help the committee in this work. He is trained and experienced in field work and he knows the Oneida people very well. Jack also has the advantage of being an outsider. He is not associated with any particular leader or segment of the community. For that reason, he can get honest answers from leaders of all segments of the community and we can have confidence that his data will not be colored by his inclinations or beliefs.

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I've talked to Jack about this project. He says he could make it out to Wisconsin the third week of November. Perhaps, one of you could talk to Jack about specific arrangements. Let me conclude by stating the obvious - this project of Jack's is not a substitute for the committee's work on the land acquisition. In the end, it's the committee's responsibility to apply the Iroquois vision of protecting future generations to the specific concern of land acquisition. The data Jack can provide will give you important food for thought.

One last thing. Occasionally, members of the litigation committee have suggested that the Wisconsin Oneidas should make acquisition of the entire 65,000 acre reservation its goal. I think that position makes a lot of sense - it's a natural land base for the Wisconsin Oneidas. If there is strong sentiment on that point, perhaps we should have Jack ask about that position specifically in his interviews. In addition, we must realize that if we take that position at the next negotiating meeting in January, we must be prepared to begin immediately a separate track of negotiations on that issue with the local people in Wisconsin. Just imagine the fall-out in Wisconsin when the word gets out about the Wisconsin Oneida's position in the negotiations. The only way to deal with that is to be prepared to talk to them immediately about the terms of land acquisition. And, of course, Charlie Leonard could help with that as well.

Is that enough food for thought for the time being?

Sincerely,

  
Arlinda Locklear

AL/mb

cc: Jack Campisi  
Norman Dorsen