

2 March, 2011
Terra Institute

Introduction to "Legend Lake: A Talking Circle"

Addressing Land Conflict Issues by Bringing Diverse Communities Together through Discourse

The "Communities in Conflict" component of Terra Institute's Building Bridges program focuses on communities which experience conflicts over land rights. The objective is to improve respect for different perspectives on these rights. This theme is being piloted in Menominee County, Wisconsin, USA with the production of a film "Legend Lake: A Talking Circle" accompanied by a Study Guide and Reference Documents for supporting group discussions about the themes of the film.

The film recounts the saga of Legend Lake, a beautiful 5,160 acre lake development, formed by joining 9 smaller lakes in the Menominee Indian Reservation in northern Wisconsin whose shore-land was subdivided and sold mostly to non-Menominee people. Legend Lake represents another chapter in the long and frequently contentious relationship between American Indians and non-Indians in Wisconsin.

Why and how the lake came into being, what land issues have arisen and what might be done to manage them is the subject of this film and related reference materials which build on the film's themes. While the film is instructive in its own right, the complete packet of materials provides teachers, students and community members with more information for greater understanding of the differing perspectives on land in the Legend Lake area.

Terra Institute has supported the efforts of the producer, director and writer of the film, Mark Anthony Rolo, the photographer and editor, Robert Breitenbach, and several Menominee and non-Menominee people to express their different perspectives on the Legend Lake development. A focus group involving teachers from local schools as well as from the University of Wisconsin devised the Study Guide and the set of Reference Documents.

The film and accompanying materials offer no solutions. They do not take sides. But they do demonstrate that people with different life histories are willing to respect each other and learn from each other and even come to an agreement as to possible courses of action.

If you want more information or wish to support this effort, please contact David Stanfield at Terra Institute: jdstanfi@wisc.edu or (608) 767-3449.

NEXT  **[PRODUCER NOTES](#)**