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**The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal on   
Human Rights, Fracking, and Climate Change**

CORVALLIS, ORE.—Spring Creek Project at Oregon State University will co-host a historic *Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal Session on Human Rights, Fracking, and Climate Change* from May 14 to 18, 2018. For the first time in its nearly 40-year history, this session of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal will be hosted completely online, will have an international focus, and will include arguments about the rights of nature in addition to the rights of people.

The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal is a highly respected international forum that grew from the Russell-Sartre Tribunal to investigate whether breaches of human rights norms occurred during the Vietnam War. Since then, it has conducted a series of high-profile hearings to determine whether human-rights standards were abridged in Bhopal, Chernobyl, and other sites around the world. The Tribunal’s most recent session was on Myanmar’s crimes against the Rohingya and Kachin refugees.

The Tribunal’s upcoming session will focus on the potential human rights violations of hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” and climate change. The Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal judges will also be asked to consider the rights of nature, because the protection of a healthy environment may be a fundamental prerequisite for the protection of human rights. Two earth jurisprudence attorneys, Lisa Mead, LL.M., Director of the Earth Law Alliance in Scotland, and Dr. Michelle Maloney, Convenor of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance, will present witness testimony and oral and written arguments addressing the session’s central questions from a rights of nature perspective.

Another team of human rights attorneys will present witness testimony and reports from preliminary tribunals held in areas where fracking is an increasingly popular means of oil and gas extraction, including Ohio, Virginia, and Australia.

More than a dozen *amicus* briefs have been submitted by attorneys and others representing non-governmental organizations, including Food and Water Watch, Food and Water Europe, Earthworks, Rogue Climate, the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, the Alaska Climate Action Network, the Center for Earth Jurisprudence, the Environmental Defender’s Office (in Australia), the Earth Law Alliance, the Native Village of Nuiqsut, Alaska, the Center for Human Rights and the Environment (in Argentina), and others. Some of these attorneys will present their evidence and arguments orally during the Tribunal.

After examining evidence and hearing testimony, judges selected by the impartial Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal board will be asked to provide an advisory opinion on four central questions:

1. Under what circumstances do fracking and other unconventional oil and gas extraction techniques breach human rights protected by international law as a matter of treaty or custom?
2. Under what circumstances do fracking and other unconventional oil and gas extraction techniques warrant the issuance of either provisional measures, a judgment enjoining further activity, remediation relief, or damages for causing environmental harm?
3. What is the extent of responsibility and liability of States and non-State actors for violations of human rights and for environmental and climate harm caused by these oil and gas extraction techniques?
4. What is the extent of responsibility and liability of States and non-State actors, both legal and moral, for violations of the rights of nature related to environmental and climate harm caused by these unconventional oil and gas extraction techniques?

The judges will likely spend several months reviewing the evidence and deliberating before issuing their opinion.

During the week of the Tribunal, attorneys, witnesses, and judges will convene via Zoom web conferencing software each day to hear evidence and testimony. The proceedings will be streamed on the [Spring Creek Project Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/springcreekproject/) and in the OSU Student Experience Center. A full schedule of daily Tribunal proceedings will be posted on the [Spring Creek Project website](http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/centers-and-initiatives/spring-creek-project) and on [tribunalonfracking.org](http://www.tribunalonfracking.org) in advance of the Tribunal for those who wish to follow along.

Leading up to this session of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, the Spring Creek Project is continuing to share the [*Bedrock Lectures on Human Rights and Climate Change*](http://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/bedrock-lectures-human-rights-and-climate-change), an online lecture series that invites artists, lawyers, scientists, writers, and activists to engage audiences in imagining how we can build communities in a world where environmental crises quickly become recognized as human rights crises. A new lecture is released each Wednesday by noon on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLoQiVlgxwVDIW4nLcC1_-A/videos?disable_polymer=1), and screenings are held Wednesdays at noon in Bexell Hall 412 on the OSU campus. The final lecture will be presented on May 30.

On May 14, in the evening of the opening day of the Tribunal, celebrated writer and ecologist Sandra Steingraber, PhD, will deliver a keynote address at the Whiteside Theatre in downtown Corvallis at 7:00 p.m. Steingraber will share her personal experience with fracking along with scientific data to help us understand how environmental injustices are related to social injustices. The event is free and open to the public, though tickets are required. Attendees can reserve their tickets on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sanda-steingraber-keynote-at-the-whiteside-theatre-tickets-44768448635).

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