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On The Double - Stranded Trail of The Kennewick Man, Controversy Between The Rights of Scientists and The Rights of Native American in Preserving The Human Past

Tamra L. Reece

Indiana University - Purdue University Fort Wayne

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Tamra L. Reece
Sponsor: Edward E. Smith
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

In July 1996, skeletal remains were discovered along the Columbia River in Kennewick, Washington. Almost immediately, controversy ensued over who would take responsibility for the remains. Indian tribes and local politicians, as well as scientists, filed lawsuits for the rights to rebury versus rights to scientific study. Initial DNA testing, prior to the lawsuits, afforded substantial evidence that Kennewick Man may not be Native American as traditionally defined, but is more likely related to a non-mongoloid Asian population. How will the laws, written for the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act, affect further scientific testing of the 9000 year-old skeletal remains? The implications of this controversy on the final deposition of the remains are discussed in this paper.