

NAME _____ DATE _____

The following description is based on a real community that faced an environmental justice issue. As you read through the scenario, identify the problem and the challenges that might make it difficult to address the problem. Then, write the solutions you would propose.

Norma and her family are tribal members in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Salmon have sustained her tribe for thousands of years. Members of the tribe value salmon as an important gift from the Creator. The tribe depends on salmon economically, culturally, and spiritually.

Norma's tribe and 11 other tribes once lived in a large area that is now eastern Washington State and parts of Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia. In the 1800s, they gave up most of their land in exchange for the right to continue fishing and living the way they always have. Today, the tribes' reservation covers a much smaller area.

Across the border from the reservation, a Canadian company processes lead and zinc. Lead, which is highly toxic, is used in car, truck, and cell phone batteries. Zinc is used to coat steel and iron and for sunscreen, fertilizers, and other products. High levels of zinc can be toxic to people.

According to tribe members, the company's operations discharged more than 400,000 tons of zinc, lead, and other toxic metals into the river over many years. They claim that this toxic waste has turned some of the shoreline black and has threatened the tribes' livelihood. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says this toxic waste is poisonous to animals and plants—especially to ones living at the river bottom. When salmon swallow the toxic metals, they are passed along the food chain to people.

The company claims that its waste was not aimed at the reservation on purpose and that other companies contributed to the pollution too. It also says that U.S. laws and courts have no authority over Canadian companies.



Problem: _____

Challenges: _____

Proposed Solutions: _____

CAREER CORNER

TRADITIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPERTS work with Native American and Native Hawaiian groups to study and protect important spiritual areas and sites. Deeply rooted in Indigenous communities, they are knowledgeable about the cultural history of these groups and are also legal experts.

