other four groups — the Nez Perce, the Umatilla, the Yakama and the Wanapum — opted not to contribute DNA to the study.

The Colville members were more closely related than were many North and South American tribes, but some other tribes still shared close ancestry with the 8,500-year-old. "We can't say that the Colville are the closest living descendants of Kennewick Man, because the reference panel is too small," warns Willerslev. "But I think we can say that Colville is very closely related to Kennewick Man."

Gail Celmer, an archaeologist at the US Army Corps of Engineers in Portland, Oregon, says that the Colville people are still eager to pursue repatriation. Her agency therefore plans to reconsider whether Kennewick Man falls under NAGPRA. "We expect challenges, so we're going to have to be very careful about how we do our reviews," she says.

Hank Greely, a legal scholar at Stanford University in California, notes that with a genome sequence analysed, "it's in the best interest of the scientists, of the government, and of Native Americans to think seriously about giving Kennewick Man's remains back to the tribes".

"The whole point of the Kennewick Man case was to ensure that important discoveries like this had an opportunity to be made," says Doug Owsley, a forensic anthropologist at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC and one of the scientists who sued the US government to gain access to the remains. "If I had to do it again, I would."

James Chatters, an anthropologist who excavated Kennewick Man and who has since set up the consulting firm Applied Paleoscience in Bothell, Washington, is torn. "As a person who worked directly with the skeletal remains, I'd like to see them in peace," he says. "As a scientist, I would hate to see one of the most complete North American skeletal remains be put back into the ground for political reasons."

CLOSE TIES

Willerslev is sticking to the sidelines on the issue of repatriation. "It's somebody else who needs to figure that one out," he says. But he wants the tribes to be involved in his research; after his team determined that Kennewick Man was Native American, he informed the five tribes about the conclusion. Some of the members travelled to his Copenhagen lab to learn more about the research, donning full-body suits to visit the clean lab in which ancient DNA is extracted from remains. The lab did similar outreach with tribes in Montana after it sequenced the genome of the 'Anzick' boy (M. Rasmussen *et al. Nature* **506,** 225–229; 2014), helping to broker a deal to rebury those bones.

Many other researchers are taking a similar approach. O'Rourke says that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy to working with native communities. He finds some of the North American Arctic groups he works with eager to contribute to his research; others are less so, and their opinions shift over time.

"We really have to change the top-down approach, where we come to people and say 'these are our research questions and you should participate, because — SCIENCE'," says Jennifer Raff, an anthropological geneticist at the University of Texas at Austin.

Just weeks before Kennewick Man's remains were discovered, researchers working in Alaska discovered a 10,000-year-old human skeleton. They notified local tribes and quickly came to an agreement that allowed them to excavate and study the remains and keep the tribes involved in the research. "You don't really hear so much about the good cases," says Raff. ■

See go.nature.com/cnizsi for a longer version.

CORRECTION

The News story 'US "export rules" threaten research' (*Nature* **522,** 266–267; 2015) should have said that information developed through fundamental research — rather than all unclassified information — is considered to be in the public domain.