Author’s book benefits ocean health research

By Richard Walker, Today correspondent

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SEATTLE – Royalties from “Last Song of the Whales,” a novel by Cherokee/Creek author and educator Wahinkpe Topa, will benefit Algalita Marine Research Foundation, which is documenting the impacts of plastic debris on the oceans.

The book is about “a remarkable partnership between whales and man, intended by the whale to conquer the growing plastic debris problem,” the author wrote. “I really want to raise consciousness with this book about this issue as well as raise funds for Algalita’s research on this issue. … I sincerely hope my first work of fiction will have a significant impact on helping us return to a balanced way of living by remembering our non-human teachers.”

The book, published by Savant Books in Honolulu, is endorsed by The Cousteau Society.

In “Last Song,” a humpback whale mysteriously takes a mixed-blood American Indian professor to sea. While struggling to survive and learning to communicate with a pod of whales, the man rediscovers his indigenous roots. In the process, he learns that thousands of whales may be on a suicide mission in the North Pacific in an effort to end human pollution of the ocean. However, when he realizes the dire effects the whales’ actions could have for all of life on Earth, he and the whale work together – against all odds – to warn the world in time.

Wahinkpe Topa, or Four Arrows, is the Native name of Dr. Don Trent Jacobs, former dean of education at Oglala Lakota College and currently a professor of educational leadership at Fielding Graduate University. He is the author of 19 non-fiction books on topics related to indigenous worldviews, education, critical thinking, social/ecological justice, human rights and wellness. He received the 2004 Martin-Springer Institute Moral Courage Award for activism.

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