



PROTECT NATIVE AMERICAN SACRED PLACES

THE MORNING STAR INSTITUTE

611 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

Washington, DC 20003

(202) 547-5531

News Statement

For Immediate Release

JUNE 19-24 SET FOR 2015 NATIONAL SACRED PLACES PRAYER DAYS

Washington, DC (6/18/15)—**Observances and ceremonies will be held across the land on June 19-24 to mark the 2015 National Days of Prayer to Protect Native American Sacred Places.** The observance in Washington, D.C. will be held on Friday, June 19, at 8:30 a.m., on the United States Capitol Grounds, West Front Grassy Area Nine (see details under Washington, D.C. in the alphabetical listing by state on the following pages).

Descriptions of certain sacred places and threats they face, as well as times and places for public commemorations, are listed in these pages. Some of the gatherings highlighted in this release are educational forums, not religious ceremonies, and are open to the general public. Others are ceremonial and may be conducted in private. In addition to those listed below, there will be observances and prayers offered at other sacred places that are under threat and at those not endangered at this time.

“Native and non-Native people gather at the Solstice and other times for ceremonies and events to honor sacred places. Everyone can participate in the National Prayer Days as a reminder to honor these precious lands and waters all the time by simply respecting them and not allowing them to be harmed,” said Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee). She is President of The Morning Star Institute, which has organized the National Sacred Places Prayer Days since 2003. “Observances are necessary,” she said, “in order to call attention to Native Peoples’ myriad struggles with developers that are endangering or harming Native sacred places.”

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1988 that there is no constitutional or statutory cause of action to defend Native sacred places. “Native Peoples are the only people or group in the U.S. who do not have a door to the courthouse to protect sacred places or site-specific ceremonies,” said Ms. Harjo. “That must change as a simple matter of fairness and equity. Without a broad statute, Native Peoples have had to cobble together laws and regulations to protect sacred places on a piecemeal basis, and oftentimes courts find these solutions to be insufficient.”

The National Congress of American Indians, the largest national Indian organization, **has called for a statutory cause of action, as well as a strengthened Executive Order on Indian Sacred Sites**, and has instructed federal agencies on how they can use existing laws and policies to protect Native sacred places. **The U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples has called on the U.S. to consult with and return sacred places to Native Peoples.**

“The federal agencies can review the manner in which they acquired jurisdiction regarding Native American sacred places and whether such jurisdiction was taken with or without Native Peoples’ free, prior and informed consent,” said Ms. Harjo. “If the agencies won’t do it, the White House should direct them to do so. And someone needs to inform the State Department, which opines that consultation is consent, that consent means consent.”

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 11, Section 2, states that countries “shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.”

The 2015 observances are the thirteenth of the National Prayer Days to Protect Native American Sacred Places. The first National Prayer Day was conducted on June 20, 2003, on the U.S. Capitol Grounds and nationwide to emphasize the need for Congress to enact a cause of action to protect Native sacred places. That need still exists.

Prayers will be offered for the following sacred places, among others:

Antelope Hills. Apache Leap. Badger Two Medicine. Badlands. Bear Butte. Bear Lake. Bear Medicine Lodge. Black Hills. Black Mesa. Blue Lake. Boboquivari Mountain. Bunchgrass Mountain. Cave Rock. Chief Cliff. Coastal Chumash Sacred Lands in the Gaviota Coast. Cocopah Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Coldwater Springs. Colorado River. Columbia River. Deer Medicine Rocks. Dzil Nchaa Si An (Mount Graham). Eagle Rock. Everglades. Fajada Butte. Ganondagan. Great Mound (Mound Bottom). Gulf of Mexico. Haleakala Crater. Hatchet Mountain. Hickory Ground. Holy Mountain. Hualapai Nation landforms in Truxton and Crozier Canyons. Indian Pass. Kaho'olawe. Kasha-Katuwe. Katuktu. Kituwah. Klamath River. Kumeyaay Bands Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Lake Superior. Luiseno Ancestral Origin Landscape. Mauna Kea. Maze. Medicine Bluff. Medicine Hole. Medicine Lake Highlands. Medicine Wheels. Migi zii wa sin (Eagle Rock). Mokuhinia. Moku'ula. Mount Shasta. Mount Taylor. Mount Tenabo. Nine Mile Canyon. Ocmulgee Old Fields and National Monument. Onondaga Lake. Palo Duro Canyon. Petroglyphs National Monument. Pipestone National Monument. Puget Sound. Puvungna. Pyramid Lake Stone Mother. Quechan Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Rainbow Bridge. Rattlesnake Island. Rio Grande River. San Francisco Peaks. Serpent Mound. Snoqualmie Falls. South Mountain. Sweetgrass Hills. Sutter Buttes. Tse Whit Zen Village. Tsi-litch Semiahmah Village. Tus Us. Valley of Chiefs. Valmont Butte. Wakarusa Wetlands. Walking Woman Place. Woodruff Butte. Wolf River. Yucca Mountain. Zuni Salt Lake. Sacred places of all removed Native Nations. All Massacre Sites. All Waters and Wetlands.

Alabama: Wetumpka -- Hickory Ground Ceremonial and Burial Grounds

The Hickory Ground Tribal Town and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma are in urgent need of prayer to protect the Hickory Ground and surrounding sacred areas along the Coosa River in Wetumpka, Alabama.

Hickory Ground is a sacred ceremonial, historical and burial ground. Hickory Ground was the last Capitol of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation before forced removal along the trail of tears to Indian Territory (now, Oklahoma).

Historic ceremonial grounds, burial grounds and individual tribal graves are located at Hickory Ground. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians excavated 57 known sets of human remains from Hickory Ground in order to develop a Poarch casino resort on the sacred land. Poarch is a group that was federally recognized in 1984 and entrusted with protecting Hickory Ground, but that lacks cultural or historical ties to the area or to Muscogee ways.

Due to its historical significance and the undisturbed human remains located there, Hickory Ground is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is protected by the National Historic Preservation Act. The Native American human remains and cultural property also are subject to protection under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

On December 12, 2012, the Hickory Ground Tribal Town and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama to protect the sacred Hickory Ground. Poarch filed a motion for dismissal, but the case still is pending before the court.

In February of 2013, three citizens of Hickory Ground Tribal Town and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation were arrested while trying to access the ceremonial ground to pray for the Ancestors. Many more Ocevpofv Muscogee citizens attempted to access Hickory Ground since then, and were turned away, but not charged. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act guarantees access to traditional sacred sites.

Wayland Gray was charged with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct, and received a guilty verdict by a judge. While two others accepted plea agreements, Gray refused to accept a plea agreement and appealed his convictions at a jury trial in the Elmore County District Court in Wetumpka, Alabama on January 14, 2015. He asserted rights under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution to access Hickory Ground as a sacred place and to exercise traditional Muscogee rights.

The jury deliberated for less than one hour and returned a verdict of not guilty on both charges.

Continued prayer is needed:

- 1) for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians **to stop their desecration of Muscogee Ancestors and the sacred Hickory Ground.**
- 2) to support Hickory Ground Tribal Town and the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in their efforts **to protect the ceremonial and burial grounds of their Ancestors.**
- 3) **to support Muscogee citizens who may be persecuted for praying at Hickory Ground in the future.**

Contact: Wayland Gray or Roman Powell, Hickory Ground Warriors, at waylandgray@yahoo.com or powell46@cox.net or Attorney Brendan Ludwick, at brendan@ludwicklaw.com or 888-929-9602.

Arizona: Mount Graham, Dzil Nchaa Si An

Mount Graham is sacred to the Western Apache people and is known to the San Carlos Apache as Dzil Nchaa Si An. It is a holy landscape where Gaan or Mountain Spirits reside and ancestral Apache rest. It is a place of ceremonies and medicine plants, and home to the endangered Mount Graham red squirrel.

The Pinaleño Mountains or **Mount Graham is a unique ecological treasure.** It is the tallest mountain in southern Arizona and encompasses six different life zones from the valley floor to its peak at 10,720 ft. Called a "Sky Island" ecosystem, the old growth forests on Mount Graham's summit are the Arizona equivalent of rainforests. **The abundant springs and high altitude meadows have offered sustenance and a source of healing to Apache people who live in the desert. The cool moist characteristics of the Mountain have nurtured 18 different plants and animals found nowhere else in the world.**

In the 1980s, the University of Arizona and its partners at the time, including the Vatican and the Smithsonian Institution, chose Mount Graham as the site to construct an observatory with seven large telescopes known as the Columbus Project. Beginning in 1988, the Arizona congressional delegation succeeded in gaining exemptions for the project from endangered species, environmental, historical preservation and other laws.

In 1989, the University of Arizona was granted a 20-year special use permit by the Coronado National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service, and appropriation riders kept the project flush with public benefits without having to abide by federal laws or regulations, including federal Indian laws intended to protect religious freedom, burial grounds and cultural properties. Vatican spokesmen stated that Mount Graham was not a religious or sacred place. University employees and lobbyists attempted to undermine the reputations of Apache religious leaders and practitioners, and retained at least one San Carlos tribal official to testify that the Mountain was not sacred or significant to the Apache Peoples.

For decades, Apache Peoples, scientists, conservationists and university students have resisted the University of Arizona's decision to build the telescopes on the Mountain's summit. Even though frequent cloud cover makes telescope viewing marginal and Mount Graham was ranked 38th in a study of astronomical sites in the U.S., the Arizona congressional delegation and the University have persisted with the project. **Today, the construction of telescopes and resulting federal closure of the Mountain's top are desecrating the Mountain and its irreplaceable relationship with Apache Peoples.**

The struggle continues to protect the natural and cultural heritage of Mount Graham from the precedent-setting destruction still being caused by the University in building its observatory on Mount Graham. The efforts of cultural protection and environmental organizations and affected Tribes to protect the sacredness of Mount Graham continue unabated.

The University of Arizona's 20-year federal permit expired on April 19, 2009, although under federal law, once an applicant files a request for renewal, the permit stays in place until the agency makes a decision. As the expiration date approached, the Forest Service gave some indication that it might categorically exclude the renewal from written environmental analysis. The Mt. Graham Coalition filed extensive comments and next heard that preparation of an EIS was under consideration. Indeed, preparation of an EIS was more than warranted.

The conditions of Mount Graham have changed substantially since the permit was granted and the observatory is even less compatible with the religious and ecological importance of Mount Graham. **Since the permit was granted, the "shape" of Mount Graham has been deemed eligible for placement on the national list of historic places. In addition, the Forest Service now acknowledges that Mount Graham is a Traditional Cultural Property to Western Apache people and has taken steps to consult (although it has a long way to go) with traditional Apache about the sacred nature of the Mountain and how to protect it.**

After 20 years of construction, the large telescope project is still not complete and very serious questions remain about its importance, utility and function from an astronomical perspective. What is NOT in question is the continued offense to the Western Apache Peoples. Equally clear is the perilous status of the native Mount Graham red squirrel. The most recent survey conducted by biologists estimated that only about 272 of this unique species, found now where else on earth, remain and some have been removed and are being kept in zoos. It has been identified by biologists as one of the mammals most likely to go extinct in the United States in the foreseeable future.

Further, several fires devastated the top of Mount Graham in past years. They were fought to protect the telescopes more than the ecosystem and, as a result, much damage was done to the Mountain that could have been avoided. The Forest Service has decided to thin the forest and otherwise manipulate the ecosystem to try to protect what remains and to restore what has been damaged.

Rather than doing the right thing and preparing an EIS to seriously study the question of renewing the permit for the observatory, the Forest Supervisor, on the eve of his departure this spring to assume a higher position in the agency, renewed the permit without any public process or, so far as is known, environmental analysis, let alone proper government to government consultation with the Western Apache Peoples. After some effort, the Mt. Graham Coalition obtained a copy of the permit. However, a thorough analysis of legal options has not yet been undertaken.

Prayers and diligence are needed now more than ever for Mount Graham. The ecosystem is under serious threat from climate change and other patterns of destruction; there is an opportunity for the Forest Service to deny a new permit for the telescopes and require they be removed; and there is a chance to protect the existing ecosystem and restore some of what has been lost. And, the sacredness of Mount Graham continues to be challenged and, while the Mountain is able to protect itself, supporters can help to protect it.

For more information, contact the Mount Graham Coalition, Roger Featherstone, President, at greenfire@featherstone.ws, or Dinah Bear, Secretary, at Bear6@verizon.net

Arizona: Oak Flat, Chi'chil Bildagoteel

Chi,chil Bilagoteel is sacred to the Western Apache and other Native Peoples. It is a holy landscape where Ga'an or Mountain Spirits reside and ancestral Apache rest. It is a place of ceremonies and medicinal plants. Oak Flat is 60 miles east of Phoenix within the Tonto National Forest.

Oak Flat is bounded on the east and south by Ga'an Canyon (known on most maps as Devil's Canyon). Ga'an Canyon empties into the San Pedro River and creates a natural travel corridor for wildlife coming from the south and traveling north. To the west is the Apache Leap Escarpment, which is the historical site where Apache warriors leapt to their deaths to avoid capture by the US military. To the north, Oak Flat is bounded by Queen Creek Canyon. Because of the religious importance of these areas to Native Americans, the local ecosystem has long been nurtured, as the spiritual wellbeing of Western Apache Tribes is dependent upon fully functioning ecosystems. The greater Oak Flat watershed has been forever sacred. President Eisenhower protected much of Oak Flat from mining by executive order in 1955.

The greater Oak Flat watershed has long been a recreational haven with the predominate features being the Oak Flat Campground and the incredible number (at least 2,500) documented rock climbing routes. The recreational community has been sensitive to the ecological and sacred nature of the watershed.

Ten years ago, two huge international mining companies, Rio Tinto and BHP-Billiton formed a subsidiary called Resolution Copper and began pushing a plan to build a huge, destructive underground mine under the Oak Flat watershed. The proposed mine would cause the collapse of almost 2 square miles of the surface at least 1,000 feet deep. The disruption of the water table, beginning long before the eventual collapse of the surface, would be profound.

Since 2005, 12 versions of Rio Tinto's land exchange legislation have been introduced. All 12 attempts were unsuccessful. However, in December of 2014, the US Congress passed the Oak Flat land exchange after the Arizona US Senators attached the land exchange as a rider to a must-pass defense bill. In the final 13th version that is now law, Oak Flat will remain public land until 60 days after the publishing of a Final Environmental Impact Statement. Rio Tinto estimates that it will take 6 to 8 years for the environmental review process to reach the publishing to a Final Environmental Impacts Statement that would trigger the privatization of Oak Flat.

Before the land exchange became law, the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the US Forest Service nominated the entire shape of Oak Flat to be placed the National Register of Historic Places and a Traditional Cultural Property. **There is a comment period on this nomination that closes June 29.** Rio Tinto has claimed that Oak Flat is not sacred and has worked to scuttle the nomination.

The environmental review process for the mine could begin at any time.

Since February 7 of this year, Apache Stronghold, a Native American NGO has been encamped at Oak Flat to protect its sacredness. This continual encampment has been hugely successful in helping bring attention to the importance of Oak Flat and needs support.

On June 17, Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) introduced the “[Save Oak Flat Act](#),” which would repeal the recent congressional giveaway of sacred Native American land to Resolution Copper, according to Grijalva’s press release. The bill is cosponsored by Reps. Tom Cole (R-OK), Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), Walter Jones (R-NC), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Norma Torres (D-CA), Patrick Murphy (D-FL), Alcee Hastings (D-FL), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Raul Ruiz (D-CA), Tony Cardenas (D-CA), Xavier Becerra (D-CA), Jared Polis (D-CO), Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) and Gwen Moore (D-WI).

“What this unpopular corporate giveaway was doing in the national security bill is anyone’s guess, and we shouldn’t wait any longer to repeal it,” Grijalva said. **“Congress shouldn’t be in the business of helping big corporations at others’ expense, and it certainly shouldn’t break faith with Native American communities. I’m proud to lead our bipartisan team in saying we should repeal this giveaway and stop treating corporate handouts as national defense priorities.”**

Prayers and diligence are needed now more than ever for Oak Flat. Efforts to repeal the land exchange and fight the proposed mine through the review process needs support. And, the sacredness of Chi, chil Bilagoteel continues to be challenged and supporters can help to protect it.

For more information, contact the **Arizona Mining Reform Coalition**, Roger Featherstone, Director, at roger@azminingreform.org or **Apache Stronghold** at apache.stronghold@gmail.com

Arizona: San Francisco Peaks

The San Francisco Peaks are sacred to Apache, Hopi, Hualapai, Navajo, Yavapai and other Native Nations. The San Francisco Peaks are home to many sacred beings, medicine places and origin sites. Myriad ceremonies are conducted there for healing, well-being, balance, commemoration, passages and the world’s water and life cycles.

The San Francisco Peaks are on federal land within the Coconino National Forest. Indeed, the **U.S. Forest Service has indicated that the San Francisco Peaks are sacred and holy to over thirteen Tribes in the southwestern United States.**

Notwithstanding the foregoing, **the Forest Service and the privately owned Snowbowl ski resort, which is located on the San Francisco Peaks, plan to expand the ski area and to use recycled sewage to make artificial snow. The expansion and sewage-to-snow plans could have a disastrous impact on the Native religions and people and on the water and health of the entire region.** The creeping recreational development has concerned Native spiritual leaders and tribal officials for decades, but current plans far exceed the past activity at the resort.

Snowbowl’s plans to clear-cut 74 acres of rare alpine habitat that is home to threatened species, make new ski runs and lifts, add more parking lots and build a 14.8 mile buried pipeline to transport up to 180 million gallons (per season) of wastewater to make artificial snow on 205 acres. **Despite ongoing protests and hunger strikes, Snowbowl has begun construction of its wastewater pipeline for snowmaking, with approval of and protection by the Forest Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.**

Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Chairperson Duane H. Yazzie testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs’ 2011 hearing on the U.S. implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: “Integrating the Declaration into existing law will focus substantively on the value of sacred sites instead of placing an undue burden on procedure. Also, the Declaration will emphasize international policy instead of relying on domestic policy alone. **Legislatively addressing Indian law jurisprudence will repair the dispossession of Native American rights to sacred sites.”**

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recommended in 2011 that the “United States Government engage in a comprehensive review of its relevant policies and actions to ensure that they are in compliance with international standards in relation to the San Francisco Peaks and other Native American sacred sites, and that it take appropriate remedial actions....the Government should reinitiate or continue consultations with the tribes whose religions practices are affected by the ski operations on the San Francisco Peaks and endeavor to reach agreement with them on the development of the ski area.

"The Government should give serious consideration to suspending the permit for the modifications of Snowbowl until such agreement can be achieved or until, in the absence of such an agreement, a written determination is made by a competent government authority that the final decision about the ski area modifications is in accordance with the United States' international human rights obligations.

"The Special Rapporteur wishes to stress the need to ensure that actions or decisions by Government agencies are in accordance with, not just domestic law, but also international standards that protect the right of Native American to practice and maintain their religious traditions. The Special Rapporteur is aware of existing government programs and policies to consult with indigenous peoples and take account their religious traditions in government decision-making with respect to sacred sites. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government to build on these programs and policies to conform to international standards and by doing so to establish a good practice and become a world leader that it can in protecting the rights of indigenous peoples."

Native Nations and environmental organizations have attempted to protect the San Francisco Peaks in court. The District Court ruled for the development in 2006. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the lower court's decision in 2007 and ruled for the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation and others. A three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruled that the Forest Service violated the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the National Environmental Policy Act in allowing the Snowbowl Resort to expand over 100 acres of rare alpine ecosystem, part of the area that is sacred to Native Peoples.

The federal government challenged that decision and petitioned the Ninth Circuit for rehearing en banc. Such petitions are rarely granted, but the Court granted this one. The case was argued in front of the 11-judge en banc panel of the Ninth Circuit in Pasadena in December 2007. The **Ninth Circuit issued the decision of the en banc panel on August 8, 2008, ruling in favor of development. The Native Nations submitted a writ of certiorari for the U.S. Supreme Court. On June 8, 2009, the Supreme Court declined to review the decision.**

The Tribes attempted to reach some sort of administrative accommodation with the new Administration, but such efforts have not borne fruit. The Save the Peaks Coalition subsequently filed suit against the federal government on the NEPA issue that the Forest Service failed to adequately consider the ingestion of reclaimed sewer water. These were the same law and facts that the prior three judge panel considered in finding that the Forest Service had failed to comply with NEPA. The prior ruling was, however, rendered non-precedential by the en banc court in the Navajo case. Notwithstanding the Ninth Circuit's prior reasoning, Judge Mary Murguia of the U.S. District Court ruled against the Save the Peaks Coalition on all counts. Shortly thereafter, her appointment by Obama to the Ninth Circuit was confirmed. The Save the Peaks Coalition appealed the ruling.

An openly hostile three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit not only ruled against the Coalition, but stated that the Save the Peaks Coalition and their attorney had abused the judicial process - with no basis of support for their accusations. The panel initially granted sanctions against the Coalition's attorney, but later withdrew that order when it appeared that the Ninth Circuit would reconsider the sanction issue en banc. According to Howard Shanker, attorney for a number of the tribes and the Coalition, "This process calls the efficacy of the legal system into question. Here we had two separate three-judge panels of the Ninth Circuit hear the exact same facts as applied under the exact same law and issue completely contrary rulings. If justice is ever to be achieved, Indian Country needs to be more involved in the political process surrounding the appointment of federal judges."

As a legal and practical matter, Snowbowl is now free to desecrate the Holy San Francisco Peaks with impunity.

For additional information, contact: Howard M. Shanker, The Shanker Law Firm, PLC, in Tempe and Flagstaff, Arizona, at (480) 838-9300 or howard@shankerlaw.net

California and Arizona within 100 miles of the U.S. Mexico Border: Authority to waive all laws for all "border security activities" including construction and operations on all public and tribal lands.

The 650 miles of current border fencing at the U.S.-Mexican border, as well as associated roads, lighting and surveillance equipment, were constructed under authority granted to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security in the 2005 REAL ID Act. Under that law, Secretary Chertoff waived 37 laws for these massive projects, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the Antiquities Act, the Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act, the Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act, as well as fundamental laws providing for notice and comment opportunities like the Administrative Procedure Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The type of harm that can occur as a result of these waivers has already been experienced by the Tohono O'Dham Nation. After issuance of a waiver in 2007, a Boeing Company subcontractor widened a 15 mile stretch of the El Camino del Diablo Road, a famous route on the National Historic Register, without first

performing an archaeological clearance and without informing the federal land management agency. Two known Hohokam archaeological sites were damaged from the blading. In October, 2007, fragments of human remains were observed in the tire tracks of heavy construction equipment in an area between Naco and Douglas, Arizona. Again, no advance inspections or clearances were required.

Now, Senator McCain, godfather of both the Mt. Graham rider and the Oak Flat Land Exchange rider, has introduced a Senate bill (S. 750) that would authorize the Border Patrol to have "immediate access" to all lands administered by the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture within 100 miles of the U.S. Mexico border and within the Tucson and Yuma sectors of the Border Patrol (the Yuma sector includes a portion of Southeast California Desert lands). Importantly, this access would be granted "notwithstanding any other provision of law" and it is the Secretary of Homeland Security who would decide how best to protect cultural and natural resources while undertaking these activities. Presently, a forward operating base and 16 surveillance towers are being constructed on the Tohono O'odham reservation. **The proposed expansion of the waiver would cover all of this infrastructure and more infrastructure to come on the Nation's reservation as well as on Ft. Yuma and the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation, along with sacred places on public lands.**

Senator McCain has now cynically filed this bill as an amendment to the "must pass" National Defense Authorization Act (**Amendment 1633**). Prayers and communications with Members of Congress are needed to ensure that this bill does not pass.

California: Medicine Lake Highlands

The decades-long battle to protect the Medicine Lake Highlands continues. The Highlands, located northeast of Mount Shasta in the mountains of northern California, is an ancient and critically important sacred and cultural place to the Pit River Nation and other Indigenous Peoples. It is where many Native Peoples have gone and continue to go to pray and gather plant medicines to use to receive healing for themselves and the world.

In the 1980s, the Bureau of Land Management issued 26 geothermal leases without conducting an adequate environmental review or consultation with tribal governments. Both the review and consultation are requirements under federal rules. In spite of BLM being out of compliance with federal rules, the agency has refused to terminate the leases.

Another reported federal violation occurred when BLM failed to terminate the leases when the projects failed to produce a geothermal steam of commercial quantity during the primary term of the lease. This level of production is a requirement under federal rules. Failure to achieve such production within the time allotted during the lease can result in the projects being terminated.

On March 12, 2015, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments from both sides on the issue. The Pit River Tribe and the other Plaintiffs claim BLM, Calpine Energy Corporation, and other stakeholders of the leases have violated the Geothermal Steam Act; the National Environmental Policy Act; the National Historic Preservation Act; and the Indian fiduciary trust doctrine. The Plaintiffs are seeking review of these claims under the Administrative Procedure Act.

The Tribal plaintiffs in the case have documented how the Medicine Lake Highlands has continually been used for spiritual and cultural purposes since ancient times. In spite of this, BLM has chosen to commit portions of these culturally significant lands to additional decades of potential energy development under the Geothermal Steam Act. Not surprisingly, BLM appears to be ignoring the sections of the Act that are intended to verify if geothermal development makes sense and can be conducted in a responsible way.

Now that the Ninth Circuit Court has heard the arguments, it may issue a decision later this year or in 2016.

For more information on this update, contact: Mark LeBeau, Pit River Nation, mdlebeau@ucdavis.edu

California: Needles – Ft. Mojave Indian Tribe, at the Topock Maze area Ceremony Cancelled due to Passing of Elders

The planned ceremony has been cancelled, due to the passing of Elders. The **Ft. Mojave Indian Tribe** remains in urgent need of prayer to protect the **Maze** and surrounding sacred areas along the Lower Colorado River.

The Maze is both a physical manifestation and a spiritual pathway for the afterlife. It has always been, and will always be, an integral and significant part of the Mojave way of life, beliefs, traditions, culture and religion. The Mojave will observe the Prayer Day at the Topock Maze site.

Pacific Gas & Electric, by its ownership and operation of the **Topock Natural Gas Compressor Station** near **Needles, California**, over the last 50 years, has polluted the groundwater under and around the Maze with hexavalent chromium, a toxic chemical that can cause numerous human and ecological health problems. The station was placed in this sensitive location long before tribes had input into the management of their sacred areas.

The Tribe has been fighting for ten years on several fronts.

First, to see that the Interim Measures to protect the River, the Groundwater and Soil Remedy design and other actions at the sacred area are done through consultation with affected tribes and in as culturally-appropriate a manner as possible. The Tribe has had to file two lawsuits (2005 and 2011), now both settled, to enforce its rights and protect the area during the remediation. Through the settlements, the Tribe has been able to return part of the sacred area to tribal ownership, receive independent technical support, and build tribal project staffing capacity, among other provisions.

Second, the Tribe has fought to see that the lead agencies accord the area the respect and recognition it so richly deserves. In 2007, portions of the project site were designated as a Riparian and Cultural Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the Topock-Needles Special Cultural Resource Management Area (SCRMA) was designated, under the BLM Resource Management Plan.

In 2011, the **Department of Toxic Substance Control** made a finding that the **Topock Cultural Area is an historic resource** under state law and the **BLM determined that a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) or property of traditional religious and cultural significance** within a 1,600 acre Area of Potential Effect is **eligible for listing on the National Register** under Criterion A, as part of what tribes have identified as a larger area of tribal traditional and cultural importance.

Still - past, current and proposed remedial actions - taken together, create continuing cumulative adverse impacts to the Mojave people, its sacred landscape and tribal religious beliefs, which cannot be fully mitigated. Construction of the groundwater remedy continues to be delayed; development of a Soil Remedy design is also taking longer than anticipated.

Continued prayer is needed for:

- 1) DOI and DTSC to exercise their independent judgment and perform meaningful analysis of, and implement meaningful mitigation for, impacts to resources of tribal concern during groundwater and soil remedy design,
- 2) Additional sacred land in this area to be repatriated to the Tribe,
- 3) Groundwater remedy construction to be as minimally invasive as possible,
- 4) BLM to improve its management of the area and secure funding to complete necessary land management plans, such as the ACEC Management Plan, and
- 5) Forgiveness for any continuing desecration that may occur until the offending facilities, including the interim measure treatment plant, are finally removed and until other required restoration of the landscape occurs.

This issue is national in scope: the **Maze** has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978 and is formally recognized as nationally significant. Moreover, the failure of state and federal agencies to fully consider direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to Native Sacred Places during pollution remediation activities remains a national problem requiring Congressional Oversight. **Pray that this oversight occurs at the highest levels.**

It should not be this hard for tribes to obtain recognition and protection for their irreplaceable sacred places. We will continue to pray for change!

Contact: **Nora McDowell, Tribal Topock Project Manager**, at (928) 768-4475, NoraMcDowell@fortmojave.com, or **Courtney Ann Coyle, Tribal Attorney**, at (858) 454-8687, CourtCoyle@aol.com

Colorado: Boulder - Native American Rights Fund, Friday, June 19, 2015, promptly at 7:00 a.m.

Please join us for a sunrise ceremony that will be held at 7:00 a.m., Friday, June 19, on the front lawn of the Native American Rights Fund at 1506 Broadway, Boulder, Colorado. The program and prayer service will last about one hour, followed by a potluck breakfast.

Speakers will include Kiowa Elder Andy Cozad and NARF Attorneys involved in sacred places work. Speakers will be followed by a moment of silence in honor of the many sacred places that are being threatened, damaged, and destroyed today.

As part of its mission, the Native American Rights Fund has long advocated for sacred site protection, religious freedom efforts and cultural rights. Recently, NARF expanded its efforts to protect lands that are sacred and precious to Native Americans. As Suzan Shown Harjo (Cheyenne & Hodulgee Muscogee), a national leader in the protection of sacred places and partner with NARF in its efforts in the area, explains, “Native and non-Native people gather at this Solstice time for ceremonies and events to honor sacred places... Observances are necessary because Native Peoples are engaged in myriad struggles with developers that endanger or destroy Native sacred places.”

Please show your support for the protection of sacred places by joining us for the June 19th program. We ask you to please bring food and/or beverages to share at the completion of the program. Sharing of nourishment together is part of the ceremony.

Please join us! If you have any questions, please contact Katrina Mora at 303-447-8760.

Kansas: Lawrence -- Wakarusa Wetlands

Prayers are needed for the protection of the threatened Wakarusa Wetlands, which continue to be turned into a massive truckway. Kansas Department of Transportation is building an eight-lane road complex through the heart of this historically significant refuge that played a key role in survival of traditional cultures and languages during the darkest days of Haskell Nations University's boarding school era.

The alumni and students at Haskell Indian Nations University have led the opposition to paving these Wetlands for well over 20 years. Our resistance continues, but today our focus is on building Wetlands access features, boardwalks, wildlife tunnels and bridges that will enable students to access areas south of the campus that are sacred and historically a part of Haskell. We are particularly concerned that the trafficway will severely diminish biodiversity in the small acreage of Wetlands that remains on Haskell property and is used extensively for teaching and research. WPO is currently constructing a 46" wide boardwalk and kiosks to insure future generations will have access to and remember the stories that keep this special place alive in our hearts.

Back when Haskell was the flagship of the entire off-reservation federal boarding school system, **these Wetlands provided the primary refuge for students who resisted cultural genocide.** Parents who came to retrieve their stolen children, or even came to beg a short visit, camped at the south end of the Wetlands on the banks of the Wakarusa River, where child inmates often crept from the dorms to meet them at night. These Wetlands were not part of the original 240 acres the Lawrence community was required to provide at the time Haskell was founded in 1884. Washington, apparently using Indian Trust funds, bought three parcels of Wetlands in 1887, 1891 and 1902 to drain them. **By 1920 they eliminated this critical refuge**, expanding the Haskell Farm where child laborers worked to grow food for the institution. During the 1950s termination era, the **BIA simply gave these Wetlands away**, along with two-thirds of the school's land base, to placate locals disappointed that Haskell Institute had survived efforts to shutter its doors!

There are children buried in the Wetlands: runaway children who drowned attempting to cross the unpredictable Wakarusa and young ones who succumbed to exposure while hiding in the tall reeds. Others are remembered and honored there, though many disappearances were never resolved. Others had their military caps or locks of hair used in spirit release ceremonies in the Wetlands, though their physical remains were interred in the Haskell Cemetery, where more than 100 Native students were laid to rest. This outdoor classroom has become a crucial part of Haskell's restoration of traditional ways of learning and honoring our ancestors.

For further information, contact **WPO President Cleta LaBrie** cletalabrie@gmail.com 1-916-2121146. Please friend **Wetlands Preservation Organization** on Facebook.

New York: Ganondagan State Historic Site, at the Great White Pine Tree of Peace June 22 at Noon

At **Ganondagan State Historic Site in New York**, there will be a Gahnonyoh (Thanksgiving), starting at Noon, on June 22, to mark the National Days of Prayer to Protect Native Sacred Places. **“We invite spiritual leaders and the general public to join us on that day as we offer words of Thanksgiving or Gahnonyoh in Seneca,”** says G. Peter Jemison (Seneca), who is the Caretaker of Ganondagan.

"We will gather before noon near the Great White Pine at the head of the Trail of Peace to offer words of Thanksgiving to the Creator," says Jemison. "The event is open to the general public and all are welcome, but no photography, please." Ganondagan is located at 1488 State Route 444 at county road 41, Victor, New York.

Ganondagan is the site of the seventeenth century town, once the Seneca Nation's Capitol, which was destroyed by the French in 1687. "Not far from this hilltop, 500 Seneca boys defended their town from an attack by French forces and their Native allies in the summer of 1687. **We will offer a special blessing for this historic Seneca Site where so many of ancestors lived and maintained our way of life.**"

Today, it is the only historic site in New York dedicated to a Native American theme. **In the fall of 2015, it will be the site of a new Seneca Art and Culture Center, which has taken 15 years to come to fruition and soon will be a reality.**

Ganondagan is sacred to the Seneca People because nearby are the remains of Jikohnsaseh the Mother of Nations, who was the first person to accept the message of Peace brought by the Peacemaker, who united the Haudenosaunee or Five Nations: Seneca Nation, Cayuga Nation, Onondaga Nation, Oneida Nation and Mohawk Nation.

Contact: **G. Peter Jemison at (585) 924-5848 or by e-mail at <mailto:pjemison@rochester.rr.com>**

New York: New York City – Ceremony for Sacred Places
Wednesday, June 24, at Noon
Hudson River at Bethune & West Streets

A Prayer of Remembrance for Sacred Places will take place on Wednesday, June 24, at Noon. The group will gather along the Hudson River in New York City near Bethune Street (between Bethune and West Streets).

The event is sponsored by the American Indian Community House, Spiderwoman Theater, SilverCloud Singers, Safe Harbors Indigenous Arts/Theater Collective at LaMaMa

Contact: Kevin Tarrant, AICH Executive Director, at 212-598-0100 or ktarrant@aich.org, or Muriel Borst-Tarrant at mborst1@msn.com or 551-208-3536.

Ohio: Newark - Newark Earthworks, Great Circle, Chillicothe - Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, Mound City, Oregonia - Fort Ancient Earthworks

Serpent Mound: Friday, June 19 – Sunday, June 21, 2015
At Soaring Eagle Retreat next to Serpent Mound – Sunrise - Sunset

The Friends of Serpent Mound will hold their annual festival to celebrate the first day of summer with a festival and viewing of the setting sun alignment with the effigy mound. Visitors can enjoy vendors and educational booths or listen to lectures to learn more about the mysteries of Serpent Mound and the cultures who left evidence of being at Serpent Mound. End the day with a guided hike around the serpent effigy or some International style or Native American drumming. For more information please contact Delsey Wilson 1-937-205-0094 OR Beverly McKenzie at 1-937-587-3953

Fort Ancient: Sunday, June 21, 2015
Gates Open @ 5:30 a.m.

Celebrate the longest day of summer at Fort Ancient with a program for morning birds! At dawn, view the astronomical alignment of the earthworks with the sunrise, and learn its importance to the Fort Ancient and Hopewell cultures. Welcome by Jack Blosser, site manager, to start the event. For more information, please contact Fort Ancient at 1-800-752-2757

Mound City: Saturday, June 20, 2015
8:00 p.m. (Free and for all ages)

Celebrate Summer Solstice while you watch the sunset at Mound City. There will be a large area in which to bring a blanket to sit and watch the sunset. Other Activities include: Indian Flutist and Camp Fire & Star Program. For more information, please contact Mound City at: 1-740-774-1126

Two thousand years ago, the Indigenous People living in the area of the Ohio Valley built more than 600 complexes of earthworks, each complex consisting of several large earthen geometric shapes each with

specific meaning and purpose. The earthworks are enormous; they were carefully designed and landscaped, built near creeks and rivers, and the People built them to the scale of the physical world around them. Many of the earthworks have walls varying from 3 to 30 feet tall and are connected by walled earthen walkways. The earthworks were built in precise geometric shapes. Some of the earthworks circles were 1200' in diameter with entryways facing the east.

One unique shape involves squares with rounded corners and entryways built into the walls and another is octagonal. Two known earthworks are built in the shape of octagons, with eight entryways and barrier mounds standing at the entrances. Burial mounds include huge rectangular flat-topped mounds, tall conical mounds with ceremonial walkways leading to them. These stunning earthworks mark the Ohio Valley as a sacred landscape. The earthworks complexes most likely had several uses, as ceremonial centers, for stickball [Lacrosse], and as places of social gatherings. In addition to using geometric forms to convey meaning and purpose -- the builders used a standard unit of measure and other mathematical consistencies in the spacing of the earthworks. Distances between earthworks at Newark can be measured in multiples of 1,054 feet, the diameter of several of the large circles.

The Indigenous People who came later shared some knowledge about earthworks and mounds, and did not destroy them or build on top of them. The Hopewell culture earthen enclosures described below, as well as the thousands of conical burial mounds in the Ohio Valley and Eastern Woodlands, stayed intact and complete for thousands of years. By the mid-1850s, they were surveyed and the surveys published by the Smithsonian Institution. By 1900, most of these sacred places in Ohio were destroyed by American settlement and excavations.

The Newark Earthworks consisted of four earthworks built over a four-square mile area. Two remain preserved. People built large geometric shapes with smooth earthen walls six feet high in the shape of a circle encompassing 20 acres and an octagon, with an area of 50 acres connected by a walkway. Rectangular barrier mounds obscured the view into the octagon from the outside. The Octagon Earthworks is an astronomical calendar observing the 18.6-year lunar cycle, marking the lunar standstills moonrises. The nearby Great Circle is 1,200 feet in diameter. **The Ellipse was a walled cemetery with many burial mounds; this was the cemetery for the complex, as there were no burials found in the rest of the complex. The Wright Square stood between the Great Circle and the Ellipse cemetery. Most of the Newark Earthworks were destroyed to clear the land for canals, railroads and heavy industry and the burials were deliberately excavated.**

The Newark Earthworks are acknowledged to be sacred. The Great Circle is a state park, and open to the public. However, the Octagon Earthworks are leased to a private country club and open to the public only four days per year, although visitors may walk the perimeter of the Octagon anytime, and can walk onto the site during the winter months and on days when golf can't be played. The Ellipse cemetery has been split into several parcels and either privately owned or for sale and zoned as an industrial park. A community grassroots effort is in progress to preserve part of the Ellipse cemetery as a park.

Serpent Mound is one of two effigy mounds in Ohio, and one of the largest anywhere in the world. Nearly a quarter of a mile long, the undulating coils made of three-foot tall earthen walls curve from a spiral tail to a head pointing across the Brush Creek valley at the point on the southwestern horizon. Recent scholarly work points to a construction of this unique mound at about 1070 CE, later than many of the more geometric enclosures around Ohio. The landscape also is marked by geological interest. A "crypto-explosion" crater cradles the arc of the valley where Serpent Mound lays on a bluff; the result of a meteorite that folded the crust of the earth when it struck 250 million years ago. This bluff of sandstone also has interest, as a visitor may walk down to creek side and look back up at the point where the snake mound ends, and see a snake headed prow of stone jutting out over the water below.

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park is made up of five sites in and around the city of Chillicothe, where once existed the largest concentration of earthworks complexes anywhere in the world. Enormous geometric earthen enclosures were placed twelve miles along the Scioto River. An alignment along three of these reconstructed mounds, pointing towards a southwestern corner gateway of Mound City, is a dramatic view, and casts the entire complex into vivid contrast. Mound City is the name for the central enclosure, a rounded-cornered square that was one of the ancient cemeteries alongside the Scioto River. Almost entirely destroyed during World War I by the construction of training camps and industry to support the war effort, it was rebuilt from the original foundations and above surviving parts of mounds during the 1930s and in another major effort during the 1960s and 1970s. Most of what is known about the Hopewell culture has been derived from the excavations of enormous rectangular burial mounds from 1890 through the 1950s. Information relating to summer solstice events can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/hoci/planyourvisit/special-events.htm>

Fort Ancient is a vast, irregular earthen enclosure where three miles of wall was built atop a pair of plateaus next to the Little Miami River Valley. Fort Ancient is the archaeological label used for a later cultural phase in Ohio, but much of the site was built 2,000 years ago around the same time as earthworks in Newark and Chillicothe. Early European settlers named the features "forts" but studies show that combat and conflict were absent from this sacred place. Reflecting pools of water were built into the site to create a sense of place – world above, world below. Halfway through the enclosure, the site has a narrow passage flanked by two mounds. Following this path leads to a bluff with a view overlooking a large valley and the creek which provided access to the site. Four stone mounds constructed 512 feet apart formed a nearly perfect square in the northern section, and were built alongside a circle; these mounds were built to observe the first day of summer, the first day of winter, and a lunar event every 9.6 years.

Fires were likely built on top of the stone mounds 2,000 years ago. From one of those stone mounds, on mornings near the summer Solstice, a particular entryway to the northeast is aligned to the sun, sending a path of light across the leveled plaza, until it paints the surface of the mound.

Many of the major earthworks in Ohio are under consideration for designation as World Heritage Sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and a proposal is being prepared. A resolution supporting the nomination has been passed by the National Congress of American Indians <http://www.ncai.org/resources/resolutions/support-the-nomination-of-ohio-earthworks-to-become-world-heritage-sites>. Additional information about the Earthworks can be found at: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5243/> <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5243/>>

South Dakota, Sisseton – World Peace & Prayer Day/Honoring Sacred Sites
Si'ca Hollow State Park
Sunday, June 21, 2015
1:00 p.m.

Prayer will be offered at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 21, by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, who founded the World Peace and Prayer Day. A potluck meal will follow the ceremony. All are welcome to attend. Contact: Dawn Eagle at 605-927-9009, DaVonna Keeble at 605-237-8060, or Paula Horne-Mullen, [<http://wolakota.org>](http://wolakota.org) <http://wppd2012.com/>



Tennessee: Nashville (Salt Town) – Sulfur Dale (in Front of Nashville Sounds Baseball Stadium)
Saturday, June 20, 2015, at 1:00 p.m.

"The Summer Solstice is a time to remember our Sacred Places," says Melba Checote Eads, organizer of the Prayer Day observance at the Sulfur Dale "The Sulfur Dale is a sacred place that was dug up for the Nashville Sounds Baseball Stadium. The Native American coalition tried to work with Nashville Mayor Dean up until the last minute last year, but they went ahead with construction. Albert Bender will be lifting up Sulfur Dale, which

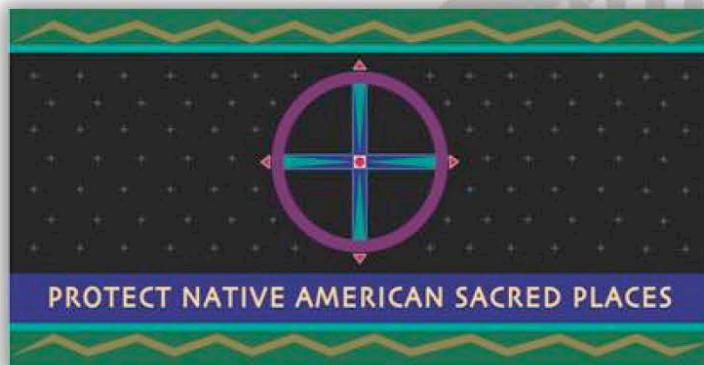
is just a block away from one Mound and across the river from two Mounds. These Mounds are not being saved and have suffered from years of abuse and building. Last year we worked hard to get more study on the ball field, but they wanted to get it underway and did not agree with us. **But we are still here and want to bring up the amazing town Nashville once was: Salt Town."** For additional information, contact Melba Checote Eads at melbaceads@ditcom.net or 615 210-7276.

Washington, DC: United States Capitol Grounds, West Front Grassy Area
Friday, June 19, at 8:30 a.m.

NATIONAL SACRED PLACES PRAYER DAY

**WASHINGTON, DC GATHERING
FRIDAY, JUNE 19TH, 2015
U.S. CAPITOL GROUNDS
WEST FRONT GRASSY AREA
8:30 a.m.**

This gathering is organized by The Morning Star Institute, a national Native rights organization dedicated to Native Peoples' cultural and traditional rights, including religious freedom and sacred places protection. The Morning Star Institute invites the public to join in this respectful observance to honor sacred places and sacred beings and all those who care for them and protect them from harm. The gathering will take the form of a talking circle. All are welcome to offer words, songs or a moment of silence for all sacred places, but especially for those that are being desecrated or damaged at this time.



Antelope Hills. Apache Leap. Badger Two Medicine. Badlands. Bear Butte. Bear Lake. Bear Medicine Lodge. Black Hills. Black Mesa. Blue Lake. Boboquivari Mountain. Bunchgrass Mountain. Cave Rock. Chickamauga Mound. Chief Cliff. Coastal Chumash Sacred Lands in the Gaviota Coast. Cocopah Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Coldwater Springs. Colorado River. Columbia River. Deer Medicine Rocks. Dzil Nchaa Si An (Mount Graham). Eagle Rock. Everglades. Fajada Butte. Fewkes Mound. Ganondagan. Great Mound (Mound Bottom). Gulf of Mexico. Haleakala Crater. Hatchet Mountain. Hickory Ground. Holy Mountain. Hualapai Nation landforms in Truxton and Crozier Canyons. Indian Pass. Kaho'olawe. Kasha-Katuwe. Katuktu. Kituwah. Klamath River. Kumeyaay Bands Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Lake Superior. Luiseno Ancestral Origin Landscape. Mauna Kea. Maze. Medicine Bluff. Medicine Hole. Medicine Lake Highlands. Medicine Wheels. Migi zii wa sin (Eagle Rock). Moccasin Bend Mound. Mount Mokuhinia. Moku'ula. Mount Shasta. Mount Taylor. Mount Tenabo. Nine Mile Canyon. Ocmulgee Old Fields and National Monument. Onondaga Lake. Palo Duro Canyon. Petroglyphs National Monument. Pipestone National Monument. Puget Sound. Puvungna. Pyramid Lake Stone Mother. Quechan Burial and Ceremonial Grounds. Rainbow Bridge. Rattlesnake Island. Rio Grande River. San Francisco Peaks. Serpent Mound. Snoqualmie Falls. South Mountain. Sweetgrass Hills. Sutter Buttes. Tse Whit Zen Village. Tsi-litch Semiahmoh Village. Tus Us. Valley of Chiefs. Valmont Butte. Wakarusa Wetlands. Walking Woman Place. Winnemucca Lake. Woodruff Butte. Wolf River. Wounded Knee. Yucca Mountain. Zuni Salt Lake. Sacred places of all removed Native Nations. All Massacre Sites. All Waters and Wetlands.

CONTACT

THE MORNING STAR INSTITUTE | SUZAN SHOWN HARJO AT SUZAN_HARJO@YAHOO.COM | TEL. 202.547.5531
OR MARY PHILLIPS AT TRUMPETNATIVE@AOL.COM | TEL. 510.205.4501

The Washington, DC observance of this year's National Prayer Day for Protection of Sacred Places will take place at the **U.S. Capitol on the West Front Grassy Area on Friday, June 19, at 8:30 a.m.** The public is invited to attend this respectful observance to honor sacred places, sacred beings and sacred waters, and all those who care for them and protect them from harm. The observance will take the form of a talking circle.

All are welcome to offer good words, songs or a moment of silence for all sacred places, beings and waters, especially for those that are being threatened, desecrated or damaged at this time.

This observance is organized by **The Morning Star Institute**, a national Native rights organization founded in 1984 and dedicated to Native Peoples' cultural and traditional rights, including religious freedom and sacred places protection.

Contact: **The Morning Star Institute** at (202) 547-5531, **Suzan Shown Harjo** at suzan_harjo@yahoo.com or **Mary Phillips** at trumpetnative@aol.com or **510-205-4501**.

Washington: Snoqualmie – Snoqualmie Falls
Friday, June 19
Beginning at 6:00 a.m.

"Every year at Snoqualmie Falls, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe observes the National Day of Prayer to Protect Native American Sacred Places," according to the Snoqualmie Tribe's June 11 press release. "This year the event will take place on Friday, June 19 beginning at 6:00 a.m. At the ceremony, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe will add its prayers, songs and energy to those of people around the globe gathering to pray for the protection of Native Sacred Places, many of which are in danger."

"Snoqualmie Falls is a place revered as sacred for thousands of years," said Lois Sweet Dorman, Snoqualmie Tribal Council member. **"Water is universally a Sacred Being, part of sacred ceremonies in faiths and religions across the world. For the Snoqualmie and other Indian Tribes of the Salish Sea region, this is the Transformer's gift to the People; a place of healing and transformation. As Snoqualmie, it is our sacred duty and responsibility to be the Spiritual Stewards of Snoqualmie Falls."**

Over two million people come from all over the world to visit Snoqualmie Falls annually. With its 268-foot waterfall, the breathtaking site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property.

"Snoqualmie Falls is a sacred landscape forever impacted by development, yet the push for more continues relentlessly," says Sweet Dorman. **"We are still here. We are still praying. We remain united in Spirit. In the Spirit of Snoqualmie Falls."**

The Snoqualmie Indian Tribe is a federally recognized tribe in the Puget Sound region of Washington State. Known as the People of the Moon, Snoqualmie tribal members were signatories to the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855. The Tribe owns and operates the Snoqualmie Casino in Snoqualmie, WA. For more information, visit www.snoqualmietribe.us.

Media Contact: Lois Sweet Dorman, Snoqualmie Tribal Council Member, lsdorman@snoqualmietribe.us
