



**THE MORNING STAR INSTITUTE**  
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News Statement

For Immediate Release

## **JUNE 17-29 SET FOR 2016 NATIONAL SACRED PLACES PRAYER DAYS**

Washington, DC (6/17/16)—**Observances and ceremonies will be held across the land on June 17-29 to mark the 2016 National Days of Prayer to Protect Native American Sacred Places.** The observance in Washington, D.C. will be held on Monday, June 20, at 6:30 p.m., on the United States Capitol Grounds, Senate East Front, Grassy Area, across from the U.S. Supreme Court at First Street, NE & Constitution Avenue, NE (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, 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 Dr. 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 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.”**

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 Ncha 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.**

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***Alabama: Wetumpka -- Hickory Ground Ceremonial and Burial Grounds  
Ocevpofv, Hickory Ground Tribal Town, Henryetta, Oklahoma, and  
Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma***

**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. **The case still is pending before the district 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. Hickory Ground Warrior Wayland Gray was charged with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct, and received a guilty verdict by a judge. He 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 its 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](mailto:waylandgray@yahoo.com) or [powell46@cox.net](mailto:powell46@cox.net) or Attorney Brendan Ludwick, at [brendan@ludwicklaw.com](mailto:brendan@ludwicklaw.com) or 888-929-9602.**

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## **Arizona: Mount Graham, Dził Nchaa Si An**

**Mount Graham is sacred to the Western Apache people and is known to the San Carlos Apache as Dził 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](mailto:greenfire@featherstone.ws), or **Dinah Bear, Secretary**, at [Bear6@verizon.net](mailto: Bear6@verizon.net)

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### **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 reinstate or continue consultations with the tribes whose religious 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."**

**The Hopi Tribe is currently in litigation with the City of Flagstaff over the contract the city maintains to sell up to 180 million gallons of wastewater per season to Snowbowl for producing effluent snow. The suit charges that the contract represents a public nuisance.**

**Although a settlement was negotiated between the Hopi and City officials, Flagstaff city council members have recently rejected the settlement.**

**Groups such as Protect the Peaks and [Truesnow.org](http://Truesnow.org) voiced concern that the City's establishment of an earthen filtration system as part of the settlement is flawed. There are no target water quality levels required by the agreement and there would be further chlorine introduction to the Peaks, which is not acceptable to other Nations' spiritual practitioners.**

**For information about a Prayer Days gathering, please contact Klee Benally at [indigenouaction@gmail.com](mailto:indigenouaction@gmail.com)**

**For additional information, contact: [www.protectthepeaks.org](http://www.protectthepeaks.org)**

**For information about the past litigation, contact: Howard M. Shanker, The Shanker Law Firm, PLC, in Tempe and Flagstaff, Arizona, at (480) 838-9300 or [howard@shankerlaw.net](mailto:howard@shankerlaw.net)**

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### ***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 in 2016.**

**For more information on this update, contact: Mark LeBeau, Pit River Nation, [mdlebeau@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mdlebeau@ucdavis.edu)**

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### **California: Needles – Ft. Mojave Indian Tribe, at the Topock Maze area**

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](mailto:NoraMcDowell@fortmojave.com), or **Courtney Ann Coyle, Tribal Attorney**, at (858) 454-8687, [CourtCoyle@aol.com](mailto:CourtCoyle@aol.com)

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**Colorado: Boulder - Native American Rights Fund, 1506 Broadway Street  
Monday, June 20, 2016, 7:00 a.m.**

***Please plan on joining us for a morning ceremony that will be held at 7:00 a.m., Monday, June 20, on the front lawn of the Native American Rights Fund, 1506 Broadway St., Boulder, Colorado. The program and prayer service will last about one hour, and be followed by a potluck breakfast. Speakers will include Native elders and spiritual leaders as well as 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, desecrated, and damaged today.***

***As part of its mission, the Native American Rights Fund has long advocated for sacred site protection, religious freedom, and cultural rights. Recently, NARF expanded its efforts to protect sacred lands. 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 desecrate Native sacred places."***

***Please show your support for the protection of sacred places by joining us for the June 20th ceremony. 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.

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**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 **Haskell Faculty, Dan Wildcat, [dwildcat@haskell.edu](mailto:dwildcat@haskell.edu)**

Please friend **Wetlands Preservation Organization** and **Haskell Indian Nations University** on Facebook.

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### ***New York: Ganondagan State Historic Site, at the Great White Pine Tree of Peace***

At **Ganondagan State Historic Site in New York**, there will be a Gahnonyoh (Thanksgiving) to mark the National Days of Prayer to Protect Native Sacred Places. **"We invite spiritual leaders and the general public to join us as we offer words of Thanksgiving or Gahnonyoh in Seneca,"** says G. Peter Jemison (Seneca), who is the Caretaker of Ganondagan. Please contact Peter Jemison for details about the commemoration.

**"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 Jikonhsaseh 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>**

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### ***New York: New York City – Ceremony for Sacred Places***

**A Prayer of Remembrance for Sacred Places will take place in New York City. Please contact the American Indian Community House for details.**

**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](mailto:ktarrant@aich.org), or Muriel Borst-Tarrant at [mborst1@msn.com](mailto:mborst1@msn.com) or 551-208-3536.

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

**Serpent Mound: Friday – Sunday, June 17-19, 2016 -- At Soaring Eagle Retreat next to Serpent Mound – Sunrise - Sunset**

At Soaring Eagle Retreat: 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. *“This event is a festival NOT a powwow, new age, pagan or religious event. It is a place to share new and ancient knowledge, stories, and craft.”* See full schedule for details and cost: <http://www.serpentmound.org/festival.html>

**Serpent Mound: Saturday, June 18, 2016 Feast of the Setting Sun - A Solstice Dinner and Celebration**

At Serpent Mound: Feast of the Setting Sun - A Solstice Dinner and Celebration - Saturday's Solstice Schedule includes inspired poetry presented by members of the Ohio Poetry Association and music by two Ohio talents: Steve Free and John De Boer. Jarrod Burks, Archaeologist will be presenting “Animal Motifs in Woodland Indian Arts.” Guided tours of Serpent Mound will be given throughout the day. The day's events will end with an hour of silence around the coils of the Serpent. During this contemplative time, you can watch the setting sun slowly descend toward the horizon directly in front of the great Serpent's eternal, watchful gaze – just as the solstice sun has aligned to the mound since it was constructed one thousand or more years ago. At the exact moment of sunset, torches will be lit on the perimeter of the mound as well as in the eye of the Serpent. The flames will be extinguished when the park closes at 10 pm. See full schedule for details and cost: <http://arcofappalachia.org/solstice-schedule/>

**Fort Ancient: Sunday, June 19, 2016, 5:45 a.m. -- Gates Open @ 5:30 a.m.**

Celebrate the longest day of summer at Fort Ancient with a guided sunrise view of the astronomical alignment of the earthworks. And learn its importance to the Fort Ancient and Hopewell cultures. This event is FREE to the public. For more information, please contact Fort Ancient at 1-800-283-8904, <http://www.fortancient.org/program-a-events/special-events>

**Preparations continue for the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks to become US World Heritage Sites. American Indians are actively participating in the global recognition of these sacred places that represent Indigenous genius and accomplishment. The global focus on Ohio's American Indian history through World Heritage could shine a light on other Native sacred sites that are in danger of being destroyed. We are all related.**

**Two thousand years ago, the Indigenous People living in the Ohio Valley region built more than 600 complexes of earthworks consisting of several precise 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 to create a level horizon as seen from inside the sacred spaces, and most are connected by walled earthen walkways.

**The earthworks were built in precise geometric shapes. Some of the earthworks circles were more than 1200' in diameter with entryways facing the northeast.** Other shapes include squares with rounded corners and polygon earthworks made up of circles and squares (<http://www.earthworksconservancy.org/precision/>). Two earthworks sites are built in the shape of octagons, with eight entryways and barrier mounds standing at the entrances. These ceremonial earthworks are earthen architecture, and not graves. Graves were in a different kind of earthwork: burial mounds. Some of these were large or smaller conical mounds, and some were huge loaf-shaped constructions. Many had ceremonial walkways leading to them. These stunning earthworks were clustered in the Ohio Valley, making it a sacred landscape. The earthworks complexes most likely had several uses, certainly as ceremonial centers, perhaps for sacred games, such as stickball [Lacrosse], and as places of large 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 and location 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 later migrated into the region recognized these places as the work of their relatives, perhaps as the “Ancestors of our Ancestors” and did not destroy them or build on top of them.**

The earthen enclosures described below, as well as the thousands of effigy mounds, earthen architecture, and burial mounds in the Ohio Valley and throughout the Eastern Woodlands, were intact and complete for thousands of years. We know this because maps of most of these places were surveyed and published in the first volume published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1848, “Monuments of the Mississippi Valley”. By 1900, most of these sacred places in Ohio had been destroyed by American settlement and excavations.

**The Newark Earthworks consists of four separate earthworks built over a four-square mile area connected in purposeful ways by wide walkways bordered by 3-foot earthen walls. The two that still stand are the only two original geometric earthworks in Ohio that have been preserved.** Waterways border the site on three sides. The Octagon Earthworks is made up of a circle with an area encompassing 20 acres, and a flat, open-corner octagon with an area of 50 acres, shaped by smooth, straight or gracefully curving walls 6 feet tall with a 20-foot base, connected by a ceremonial walkway. Rounded loaf-shaped barrier mounds obscured the view into the octagon from the outside. The Octagon Earthworks is an astronomical calendar observing the 18-year and 219-day lunar cycle, marking the lunar standstill moonrises, observed at ancient places around the globe. Although the earthwork is shaped into an “octagon” the site actually has seven external entryways and one leading further into the earthwork, into the circle. “Seven” is a number thought to be of cultural significance to American Indian Woodlands cultures. Two miles away, the Great Circle is 1,200 feet in diameter, and had a clay-lined 14-foot deep ditch which held water. It is likely that deceased relatives were prepared for burial at this sacred and beautiful place. **The “Ellipse” was a walled cemetery with many burial mounds; this was the cemetery for the complex. An enormous square with rounded corners and entryways toward the other earthworks stood between the Great Circle and the Ellipse cemetery. The land at the Ellipse cemetery was cleared for canals, railroads and heavy industry and the burials were deliberately excavated, although what happened to them remains undocumented.**

**The Newark Earthworks are acknowledged to be sacred places. The Great Circle is a state park, and open to the public. However, the Octagon Earthwork is leased to a private country club until 2078 and open to the public only four days per year; visitors may walk the perimeter of the Octagon, and can walk onto the site only on days when golf can't be played due to weather or maintenance.** The Ellipse cemetery has been split into several parcels and privately owned and zoned for industrial use. A community grassroots effort led to a historical marker educating the public and there continues to be advocates for preserving the creek side of the of the Ellipse cemetery as green space. A corner of the Wright Square is preserved.

**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. The landscape also is marked by geological interest. A “crypto-explosion” crater cradles 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. <http://arcofappalachia.org/serpent-mound/>

**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.** All of these mounds and earthen architecture have been damaged; although most of them are marked within the park and some of have been reconstructed. An astronomical alignment along three of these mounds, pointing towards a southwestern corner entryway of Mound City, is a dramatic view, casting 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 cultural items found during the exhaustive excavations of enormous rectangular burial mounds from 1890 through the 1950s. Information relating to events can be found at <http://www.nps.gov/hocu/planyourvisit/special-events.htm>

**Fort Ancient is a vast, irregular earthen hilltop 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 and creates a specific sense of place – world above, world below. Halfway through the enclosure, the site has a narrow passage flanked by two guide mounds. Following this path leads to a bluff with a view overlooking a large valley and the creek which provides 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. Recent research suggests that at least part of the site was utilized for cultivating crops. **From one of those stone mounds, on mornings around 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.**

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 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5243/> and <http://worldheritageohio.org/>

A resolution supporting the nomination sponsored by the Newark Earthworks Center with support by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma 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 research concerning American Indian perspectives of the earthworks can be found by contacting the Newark Earthworks Center: [earthworks@osu.edu](mailto:earthworks@osu.edu), <http://newarkearthworkscenter.blogspot.com>, by calling 740-364-9584.

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**Tennessee: Chattanooga – Chattanooga 2016 National Sacred Places Prayer Day  
Sunday, June 19 at 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. (Eastern)  
Citico Town & Mound • 1428 Riverside Drive**

An observance of the Chattanooga 2016 National Sacred Places Prayer Day will be held on Sunday, June 19, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m., at the site of the old Citico Town & Mound • 1428 Riverside Drive, Chattanooga Tennessee.

This observance will be hosted by the Chattanooga InterTribal Association, with guest speakers from the Coalition to Save Chattanooga's Lincoln Park & Chattanooga Organized for Action.

The Native American Indian Association of Tennessee has announced its participation and support of the event and that NAIA President Cheryl Prevatte will be giving a speech supporting the preservation of the Citico Town & Mound.

**Summary of the Sacred Place:** The Citico Town and Mound was a major center of the Coosa confederacy, second in size to Etowah, at the time of Hernando de Soto's march through the area in 1540. The City of Chattanooga/Chattanooga/Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency is planning a major extension of Central Avenue ("Central Avenue Extension Project") through the African-American neighborhood of historic Lincoln Park - the first African-American park in the southern USA, across the Norfolk Southern railroad, then across Citico Creek, around the remains of the major Mississippian/Muscogee Citico Town and Mound site, adjacent to the major Cannon/Cumberland industrial '[brownfield](#)' site, to connect to Riverside Drive. This is a federally funded project. Funded 80% with Federal funds and a 20% match with City capital funds.

The gathering site of [1428 Riverside Drive, Chattanooga](#) is the 13.3-acre private property that is currently undeveloped. It was recently sold for \$14.3 million to University Housing Group, ([gislive.hamiltontn.gov/hcflex/](http://gislive.hamiltontn.gov/hcflex/)) ([www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/feb/07/30-millihousing-project-targets-students/287038/](http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/feb/07/30-millihousing-project-targets-students/287038/)). Proposed construction will completely excavate the Citico Town and Mound site. Given the extensive size of Citico Town, combined road and commercial construction will most likely affect over 100 burials at the cultural site. Although it may be physically raised, the spirits of the Ancestors are there and the sacred place cannot be destroyed.

**Known archaeological sites present:**

**SITES DOCUMENTED BY NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Site Name or Number	Time Period / Component	NRHP Status
40HA65	Dallas Phase Prehistoric Native American	Not Evaluated
40HA76	Dallas Phase Prehistoric Native American	Not Evaluated
40HA120	(Camp Cherokee) 1836-1838 / Historic Native American Internment Camp	Not Evaluated
40HA476	(Trail of Tears) 1836-1838 / Historic Native American Removal Route	Not Evaluated / Part of Trail of Tears National Historic Trail
40HA533	1866-1900 /segment of an abandoned rail line	Not Evaluated
40HA569	(Trail of Tears) 1836-1838 / Historic Native American Removal Route	

Tribal Nations and Native American Indian representatives on the Tennessee Archaeological Advisory Council have not been identified as stakeholders in the "development" process, as recommended by the "Public Participation by Design: A Guide for Planners" commissioned by the Chattanooga-Hamilton County

Regional Planning Agency 2004, and are not known to have been contacted by city, state or federal agencies. The 2006 [Memorandum of Understanding between the Cherokee Nation and the City Of Chattanooga](#) expired in 2009.

Archaeological site files are available in pdf format from the [Tennessee Division of Archaeology staff](#).

- Mike Moore <[mike.c.moore@tn.gov](mailto:mike.c.moore@tn.gov)>, Director and State Archaeologist 615-741-1588, ext. 109 Division operations and budget; prehistoric archaeology; Native American burial questions; Mississippian studies
- Jennifer Barnett <[jennifer.barnett@tn.gov](mailto:jennifer.barnett@tn.gov)>, Federal Programs Archaeologist 615-741-1588, ext. 105 SHPO archaeological services; historical archaeology
- Suzanne Hoyal <[suzanne.hoyal@tn.gov](mailto:suzanne.hoyal@tn.gov)>, Site File Curator 615-741-1588, ext. 104 Site records management; publications; prehistoric textile studies
- Mark Norton <[mark.norton@tn.gov](mailto:mark.norton@tn.gov)>, State Programs Archaeologist 615-741-1588, ext. 113 State agency and lands review; permits; Paleoindian studies

For more information, contact: Tom Kunesh at [tom@kunesh.net](mailto:tom@kunesh.net)  
Chattanooga InterTribal Association, 209 Morningside Drive, Chattanooga TN  
423 596 3793. For more references, see [Citico mound webpage](#)

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***Washington, DC: United States Capitol Grounds, Senate East Front Grassy Area  
Across from the U.S. Supreme Court Building  
First Street, NE at Constitution Avenue, NE  
Monday, June 20, at 6:30 p.m.***

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 Monday, June 20, at 6:30 p.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](mailto:suzan_harjo@yahoo.com) or **Mary Phillips** at [trumpetnative@aol.com](mailto:trumpetnative@aol.com) or 510-205-4501.

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***Washington: Snoqualmie – Snoqualmie Falls  
Friday, June 17  
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. This year the event will take place on Friday, June 17, 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 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. We must protect this sacred place. For all people. For all time.”**

*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](http://www.snoqualmietribe.us).*

**Media Contact: Jerry Lamb, Governmental Affairs, Snoqualmie Tribe, [jlamb@snoqualmietribe.us](mailto:jlamb@snoqualmietribe.us)**

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**Washington, Spokane – National Congress of American Indians  
Mid-Year Conference  
Sunrise Ceremony  
Wednesday, June 29, 6:45 a.m.  
Spokane River Centennial Trail**

**The National Congress of American Indians Sunrise Ceremony will be held during the NCAI 2016 Mid-Year Conference at 6:45 a.m. on Wednesday, June 29. The NCAI Sunrise Ceremony is a part of the observances and ceremonies during the National Days of Prayer to Protect Native American Sacred Places.**

**The public is invited to attend NCAI’s respectful observance to honor sacred places, sacred beings and sacred waters, and all those who care for them and protect them from harm.**

**The Sunrise Ceremony will be held at the Spokane River Centennial Trail.**

**For further information, please contact NCAI Deputy Director Robert Holden, at [Robert.Holden@NCAI.org](mailto:Robert.Holden@NCAI.org).**

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**World Peace & Prayer Day/Honoring Sacred Sites -- Tuesday, June 21, 2016**

**Chief Nac’a Arvol Looking Horse – 19th generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe Bundle and recognized spiritual leader of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota Sioux Nation – requests that all peoples observe the 2016 Annual World Peace And Prayer Day at their own sacred places. He has issued the following statement:**

**Maka akantula (People of the Earth),**

**My name is Nac’a Arvol Looking Horse founder of World Peace and Prayer Day and Honoring Sacred Sites Day, spiritual leader of the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota Sioux Nations, known as the Buffalo People.**

**I humbly ask People of the Earth to join together at your own sacred place of prayer, in the effort of healing our Ina Maka (Mother Earth) on June 21st.**

**For 20 years, People heard the great calling to follow their spirit and helped bring attention to Ina Maka’s Sacred Sites around the world, All Nations, All Faiths, One Prayer. Wopila (a great thank you) to each and every one of you that made a difference creating that sacred circle in your territory. I would also like to take this time to acknowledge the People who are making sacrifices, either through walking, riding in sacred Horse Rides or running, to bring attention to the atrocities and preserve what we have left for our children’s children.**

**When the Elders passed the Sacred Bundle to me to care for on behalf of the People, they told me of the warning that came from Pte San Win (White Buffalo Calf Woman) 19 generations ago. She left a prophecy that when animals are born white, it would be a sign of a blessing, but this sign would be a symbol of opportunity to change the path of destruction to all life that we would be on. I thought that this would not be in my lifetime. The birth of the white buffalo calf Miracle in 1994 and all the white animals that stood upon the earth since that time are messages that we can no longer ignore. We have always known that man has gone too far, even scientifically this sad truth has been shared of earth and climate changes.**

Children are now being born with great sickness, just as the Elders told us would happen. Water is now contaminated throughout the world, the blood of our Mother Earth. The power of Woc'ekiya, which means kiya to send, c'aya to cry (prayer) has to be done with great intention of great Unity, this is what has brought us through many hard times. It is time for this understanding to take place on a global scale.

We are asking all People of the Earth to help create this energy shift by making the Woc'ekiya stronger by going to your own Sacred Site or Place of your Faith on June 21st, to join together to pray for the healing of the World's Sacred Waters. This year, I will be joining you while attending a traditional ceremony, many prayers are going out to protect our mni wic'oni, our water of life.

I sincerely ask for Unity on behalf of all life upon Mother Earth to heal and all life to come. It is time all People understand Mother Earth is the Source of life, not a resource.

In a Sacred Hoop of Life, where there is no ending and no beginning.

Onipiktec'a (that we shall live),

Nac'a (Chief) Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe

For additional information, contact: Paula Horne-Mullen, [Wolakota.org](http://www.wolakota.org) <<http://www.wolakota.org>>  
<http://wppd2012.com/>

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