



# NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

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### RESOLUTION #SD-02-018

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### Title: Protection of Threatened Sacred Places: An Urgent Priority

**WHEREAS**, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people and their way of life, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the NCAI adopted Resolution #SPO-01-162 at its 2001 Annual Meeting in Spokane, Washington, calling for the creation of a Sacred Lands Protection Coalition to address the inadequacy of current laws and administrative policies pertaining to protection of sacred lands; and

**WHEREAS**, said Coalition was organized in March 2002 and has been working to achieve goals specified in the above resolution; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 8 and 9, 2002 Sacred Lands Protection Coalition convened a meeting in San Diego, California, of traditional spiritual leaders and elders, tribal leaders and advocates for sacred places including representatives from more than 50 Indigenous nations to identify issues, potential solutions and strategies for the protection of sacred places.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the NCAI does hereby make the protection of endangered sacred places identified at the San Diego Coalition meeting an urgent priority. Such actions and sites should include:

1. Assisting the Zuni Nation (of New Mexico) in their efforts to halt any development of the Salt River Project coal strip mine and its adverse impacts on the sacred Zuni Salt Lake and the Sanctuary Zone including halting further removal of any ancestral remains.
2. Assisting the Quechan Nation (of California) in their struggles to halt the Glamis Imperial Mining at the sacred Quechan Indian Pass.
3. Assisting the Pitt River Nation (of California) in stopping the Calpine Corporation construction of geothermal mining in the sacred Medicine Highlands Region.
4. Assisting the Carrizo/Comecrudo Nation (of Texas) to end the destruction of sacred lands flooded by Amistad Lake and Falcon Dam on the Rio Grande River. Further, we support the development of a graves protection policy in the state of Texas.
5. Assisting the Mandan/ Hidatsa/Arikara and other tribal nations' ongoing struggle to protect sacred places due to the six main-stem dams on the Missouri River.
6. Assisting the Lakota Nation's ongoing struggle to protect and return the sacred Black Hills. Furthermore, support of the Lakota peoples opposition to National Park Service excavation in the sacred Badlands area.
7. Assisting Native Nations of the Northern Plains who have historically used Pipestone National Monument for religious and cultural purposes to fully participate in the development of management plans.
8. Assisting the efforts of the Hualapai Nation in protecting sacred landscapes in Truxton Canyon and Crozier Canyon that are being damaged by private landowners' excavation of boulders for use in decorative landscaping.
9. Assisting the efforts of the Hopi and Navajo people in halting the Peabody Coal Company slurry coal mining process that depletes the Navajo aquifer and negatively impacts the desert landscape and cultural life ways.
10. Assisting the Snoqualmie Tribe (of Washington) in the preservation of Snoqualmie Falls and to restore the natural free flowing falls by decommissioning the hydroelectric facility.
11. Assisting the Coastal Chumash people (of California) in their struggle to protect and recover ownership of sacred lands in the Gaviota Coastal region of southern California.
12. Assisting the Tohono O'odham Nation (of Arizona and northern Mexico) in protecting the sacred Boboquivari Mountain from desecration and the recovery of that ownership of this mountain.

13. Assisting the Lummi Nation (of Washington) in the recovery and reburial of ancestral remains excavated by the city of Blaine at the ancient village of Semiahmah.
14. Assisting the Yurok Nation (of California) in increasing water flows at the Klamath River to preserve the salmon and other endangered species of the ecosystem. Further, to support national legislation to redress previous ecological damage and to prevent future diversion of critical water flows.
15. Assisting the Berry Creek, Moore Town, and Enterprise rancherias (of California) in their efforts to protect sacred lands impacted by the fluctuation zone of the California Water Project at the Oroville Dam Reservoir.
16. Assisting the southwest tribal nations to stop the expansion of the Arizona Snow Bowl at the sacred San Francisco Peaks which are now considered eligible for listing under the National Register of Historic Places.
17. Assisting the Tongva and Acjachemen peoples (of California) in the protection and preservation of Puvungna.
18. Assisting the San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians (of California) to protect Katuktu, also known as Morro Hill, from desecration.
19. Assisting the Muscogee (Creek) Nation to protect Ocmulgee National Monument and Ocmulgee Old Fields from destruction by the federal highway, Eisenhower Extension, in central Georgia.
20. Assisting the Apache Peoples to protect Mt. Graham from desecration and destruction by the federal government and educational institutions.
21. Assisting the many Native Peoples to protect the Medicine Wheel from destruction by federal and private entities.
22. Assisting the First Nations Dakota Tribes of Minnesota to recover ownership of the Cold Water Spring located on the Department of the Interior Old Bureau of Mine Lands in Minneapolis, MN; and
23. Assisting the Picuris Pueblo to protect and reclaim its sacred micaceous clay-gathering place from further mining damage; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the NCAI consider extending solidarity and support for the following Indigenous sacred sites outside of the United States:

1. Assist the efforts of the United Confederation of Taino people of Puerto Rico in reclaiming the Caguana Ceremonial Site currently under National Park Service Control.