



APACHE DEMAND HALT TO TELESCOPE PROJECT

Claim Violation of Cultural and Religious Rights

(USA) All nine members of the San Carlos Tribal Council signed a letter addressed to the US Forest Service demanding an immediate halt to the Columbus Project, the construction of telescopes on Mount Graham in southeastern Arizona. The Apache cited violations of four federal laws protecting human, cultural and religious rights and freedoms. The list of law violators receiving the letter included the US Forest Service, the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, the Vatican, the German and Italian governments, and Ohio State University. The Vatican and German astronomers have already constructed a road, leveled trees and earth on the sacred Apache mountain and more desecration is planned.

Dzil nchaasi an is the birthplace of San Carlos Apache culture. Mount Graham is identified by Apache traditionals as the home of the Mountain Spirit Dancers who taught early Apaches their sacred songs and dances and where healing herbs and water are to be gathered. There are numerous religious shrines on the peaks of Mount Graham that date back over a thousand years. The Columbus Project threatens to destroy the home of the Crown Dancers and the sacred power of the mountain. Apaches and members of Zuni religious societies continue to voice their concern that sacred sites will be desecrated, interfering with the conduct of their religious ceremonies.

An earlier Tribal Council resolution stated that the project was:

"...a display of profound disrespect for a cherished feature of the Apache's original homeland as well as a serious violation of Apache traditional religious belief. ...for generations our elders have instructed us on the sacredness of Dzil nchaasi an (Big Seated Mountain, aka Mount Graham) and its vital importance for maintaining the integrity of our Apache culture and tradition... Graham is essential to the continued practice of physical and spiritual healing by Apache Medicine-men/women, and to their apprenticeship as competent traditional religious specialists..."

The Tribal Council now states:

"...massive amounts of ethnographic and scholarly material demonstrate the Apache's traditional and contemporary use of Dzil nchaasi an. Much of that material has been readily available to the Forest Service or has been in the possession of the University of Arizona. The fact that this important information was disregarded during the public review of the proposed project is disturbing. The University of Arizona and the Department of Agriculture have proceeded illegally and in bad faith in their construction of the telescope facility on Dzil nchaasi an (Mount Graham)."

Ola Cassadore Davis, Apache Survival Coalition chairperson, asks "Why do the University of Arizona, German and Vatican astronomers violate the rights of Indian people?... When Pope John Paul came to Arizona (in 1987) he told us to preserve our culture... They would crush what is most sacred to us and our traditional ways.. Why do they now destroy the foundation of our spiritual heritage?"

Franklin Stanly, Apache Medicine man, wrote "if the Vatican telescope is built, the Vatican will celebrate its telescope's completion next year and mark the shameful continuation of 500 years of cultural genocide against Native Americans.

The Columbus project is a collaboration between The University of Arizona, the Ohio State University and the Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory in Florence, Italy.

At present, the participating institutions are completing plans and technological development for the telescope. Construction is expected to be well underway by 1992, and to be completed by 1996. The site, which was approved by Congress in 1988, provides first-rate observing conditions and is relatively close to the astronomical research center located in Tucson, Arizona.

The Columbus Project telescope and instrumentation budget is \$60 million. The costs and the observing time will be shared equally among the partners. The construction funds will be provided by the Italian government and from private fund-raising efforts being coordinated by the two universities.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe states its firm and total opposition to the construction of a telescope on the top of Mount Graham and the Tribe stands ready to defend its constitutional rights if this project is allowed to continue.

To support or request more information contact:
Apache Survival Coalition
P.O. Box 11814
Tucson, Arizona 85734



MILLIONS OF \$\$\$ FOR GENETIC SURVIVAL???

A group of prominent North American scientists, part of the Human Genome Organization (HUGO), has set up a committee to study a plan to collect genetic material from 100 endangered peoples, including the Yanomami of Brazil. They estimate it will cost \$10 million to \$20 million over the next five to ten years. They say that the effort should start immediately, because "in another 10 years, it may be too late for tribes like the Yanomami, who are dying in large numbers from disease and environmental damage caused by gold mining in the Amazon forests."

We at SAIC feel that there is much more to be learned from living indigenous peoples than can ever be learned from genetic samples. These enormous financial and academic resources should be used to assist the survival of indigenous peoples and their environments.

Native Pacific Islander Women Writing an Anthology

The following message was sent to SAIC just in time to make it into the Newsletter!

Native movements for sovereignty and decolonization are current issues throughout the Pacific from Hawai'i to Guam, Belau (New Caledonia), Kanaky, Tahiti, Fiji and Aetearoa (New Zealand). There are more Native Hawaiians, Samoans, and Chamorros in the United States than in Hawai'i, Samoa and Guam. This movement away from our Native islands does not mean we no longer identify as Pacific Islanders. We are women voyagers who have traveled across the ocean to Turtle Island, bringing our culture and tradition with us like our ancestors who sailed the oceans centuries ago. We are now writing an anthology of Pacific Island Native women. Join us!

For more information contact Hinano K. Campton (408) 338-4678, or Teresia Teaiwa (408) 457-2581.
Daughters of the First People
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