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Apache Stronghold Visits Peehee Mu'huh (Thacker Pass) in the Second Stop of their Prayer Journey to the Supreme Court



Apache Stronghold traveled to the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Reservation on August 6, 2024 as the second stop on their Prayer Journey to the Supreme Court to Stop the Shattering of Human Existence and Protect Mother Earth. While there, they reconnected with the People of Red Mountain for prayer and ceremony. They also traveled to Peehee Mu'huh (Thacker Pass), a sacred site currently being desecrated and damaged by a lithium mine, despite long-term and ongoing efforts by the People of Red Mountain to stop the mine from happening.

When they arrived, the Apache Stronghold was greeted with songs and a family meal, with elders gathering to hear from Dr. Wendsler Nosie Sr. about the status of the fight to protect Oak Flat. In the discussion, Dr. Nosie emphasized the importance of young people standing up as leaders in the fight to protect sacred sites, both spiritually and environmentally, for the future of all people, with the older generations serving as a reference and knowledge base the younger ones can turn to for guidance as they move forward.

He also emphasized the importance of the tribes from all over the country coming together, along with people from all backgrounds, saying that everyone needs to work together in order to make a difference for the future of Mother Earth and all who live here. Journeys like this one strengthen the connections developing between the tribes and people fighting to protect what is sacred, to share in prayer, ceremony, and stories to restore themselves and prepare for the fight ahead.

When the Apache Stronghold arrived at the entrance to Peehee Mu'huh, they found a chain link wall with a locked gate, blocking everyone except those authorized by the mine. Speaking of the experience later, Dr. Wendsler Nosie Sr. shared, "it's a sad reminder that people don't know the day could come, if Oak Flat is ever transferred to Resolution Copper, that the acorns, medicine plants, and water could be locked away behind a gate facing death at the hands of a corporation. People need to come together to stop this desecration happening at Peehee Mu'huh and prevent it from happening everywhere else, before it's too late."

It was a new experience seeing the gate like that there, since the last time the Apache Stronghold visited Peehee Mu'huh, the land was not closed off, and they could go there to pray. While they were there, security trucks came to go through the gate, and one of the drivers admitted that they knew the Apache Stronghold would be there with the People of Red Mountain. One truck drove off toward the mine, while the other driver re-locked the gate and left, emphasizing that the mining company has access to Peehee Mu'huh, but the Indigenous people who were stewards of the land since time immemorial, and all others who would go there to pray, are locked out.

After visiting Peehee Mu'huh, the next stop on the Apache Stronghold's Prayer Journey to the Supreme Court to Stop the Shattering of Human Existence and Protect Mother Earth will be the Bay Area in California, where they will join California tribes for a prayer ceremony on August 8.

Photo by Molly Peters