

APACHE STRONGHOLD

POB 766 SAN CARLOS, AZ 85550



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Contacts:

Dr. Wendsler Nosie, Sr., Apache Stronghold, apaches4ss@yahoo.com, (928) 200-7762

Michael V. Nixon, michaelvnixon@yahoo.com, (503) 522-4257

APACHE FILE LIEN ON OAK FLAT, TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER TO STOP LAND TRANSFER FROM FOREST SERVICE TO FOREIGN MINING COMPANY

FLORENCE, *Ariz.*— Apache Stronghold, on behalf of traditional Apache religious and cultural leaders, filed a lien on Oak Flat, or *Chi'chil Bildagoteel*, Wednesday with the Pinal County Recorder's Office in Florence, *Ariz.*, to stop the transfer of Oak Flat to British-Australian corporate mining giant Rio Tinto and its subsidiary, Resolution Copper.

The lien seeks to prevent the U.S. Forest Service from transferring the title for Oak Flat to Resolution Copper while the Apache Stronghold's case is being heard in court.

Apache Stronghold filed a [lawsuit](#) Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Phoenix challenging the land transfer on the grounds that the giveaway and destruction of Oak Flat violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and Apaches' constitutional rights to religious freedom, due process, and petition and remedy, and is a breach of trust and fiduciary duties.

Apache Stronghold also filed a [temporary restraining order](#) today, asking the judge in the case to forbid the Forest Service from publishing the final environmental impact statement until the Apache lawsuit is resolved.

The land transfer could take place as soon as Friday, upon publication of a final environmental impact statement by the Forest Service.

"We are serious. This is our lives," said former San Carlos Apache Tribal Chairman and Apache Stronghold leader [Dr. Wendsler Nosie, Sr.](#) "Oak Flat is holy and sacred. *Chi'chil Bildagoteel* is central to our traditional religion and identity as Apache people. Giving away our sacred land for destruction by a foreign mining company destroys our ability to practice our religion.

Besides, the United States government never legally took *Chi'chil Bildagoteel* away from us. It is still Apache land."

Oak Flat remains in legal possession of the Apache, according to the 1852 Treaty between the United States and the Apache. The Treaty was never amended or rescinded.

The lawsuit brings the work of renowned archaeologist and professor, [Dr. John Welch](#), in front of the court. Welch's research found:

"...the "Treaty shall be binding [and] ... the government of the United States shall so legislate and act as to secure the permanent prosperity and happiness of said Indians."; and, that,

*"I found no evidence, in the proceedings of the Indian Claims Commission or elsewhere, of any change or diminishment in the Apaches' reserved treaty rights to the Western Apaches' Treaty Territory. I found no evidence that the United States compensated the Apache treaty rights holders for *Chí'chil Biłdagoteel* (Oak Flat). Oak Flat is Apache land, as it has been for centuries and is not owned by the United States of America or any other entity or person."*

More information at: <http://apache-stronghold.com/about-us.html>

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