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## **Hundreds Show Support 4 Native American Sacred Sites & Human Rights**

by Save The Peaks Coalition ( [coalition \[at\] savethepeaks.org](mailto:coalition@savethepeaks.org) )

*Friday Sep 15th, 2006 12:54 PM*

Hundreds Show Support For Native American  
Sacred Sites & Human Rights  
Navajo Nation President and Tribal Leaders, Among Many,  
at 9th Circuit Court of Appeals



**sacred\_march.jpg**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release:

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San Francisco, CA - Hundreds of people gathered today in front of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, unified in efforts to save a sacred mountain in Arizona from desecration by a proposed ski resort development. The courts heard arguments against the ski resort's proposed expansion and plan to make snow out of treated sewage effluent. This wastewater has been proven to contain harmful contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals, hormones and cancer causing agents.

“Just the thought of making snow with reclaimed sewer water on the San Francisco Peaks should be an affront to all people of conscience,” said Howard Shanker of the Shanker Law Firm who represented the Navajo Nation, Havasupai, Yavapai Apache, White Mountain Apache, Sierra Club, and others. “The Peaks are sacred to 13 of the Tribes in the Southwestern United States. We are here because the lower court decision was wrong. We are hopeful that this will be a case where what the court determines to be

legal is also right and morally defensible.”

Tribal officials, including the President of the Navajo Nation, spiritual leaders, environmental activists and dozens of grassroots supporters traveled from throughout the country to join together with Native American communities and environmental groups from the Bay Area. The courtroom overflowed while outside colorful banners went up and numerous prayers were offered.

“This is a precedent setting case, which threatens to undermine Native American religious freedoms and environmental integrity.” Said Rudy Preston of the Flagstaff Activist Network. “The significance of this case is shown through the unity of the plaintiffs made up of Indigenous Nations, environmental groups, and individual community members. This is not just an issue of indigenous rights violations, this is an extreme environmental and human rights crisis.”

Representatives of the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, Acoma, Yavapai Apache, the Sierra Club, Flagstaff Activist Network and the Save the Peaks Coalition spoke at a news conference immediately after the 9th Circuit Arguments.

Citing the importance of the San Francisco Peaks to his people, Joe Shirley Jr., the President of the Navajo Nation stated, "The world needs to know that we need to defend our way of life".

“I was very encouraged by what I saw and heard today, I think that the court seemed to understand the profound impact that this will have on the tribes that are involved, on their religions and on their religious practices.” Said Jack Trope of DNA Legal Services.

"Many courts over the years have done the wrong thing on these issues, hopefully this is the court that is going to do the right thing"

“Sacred sites are the most holiest areas that our Indian people hold Sacred, it is the beginning of our way of life, these are places we go to communicate with our creator, San Francisco Peaks is one of those areas, just like Bear Butte in South Dakota, Medicine Lake in Northern California, or Mt. Shasta, or the Shell Mounds of the Ohlone.” Said Jimbo Simmons of the San Francisco based International Indian Treaty Council. “Today these sites are threatened by developments that have no respect for our way of life, and our spirituality, and our natural way of life, we must continue to stand up for our beliefs. The spirit of the past will rise to claim the future, that’s what we are doing today.”

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<http://www.savethepeaks.org>

### **Presence At Courthouse**

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