



National Congress of American Indians

NCAI News

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PROTECTION OF AMERICAN INDIAN SACRED LANDS
TOPIC OF MEDIA BRIEFING

(Washington, D.C.) On Monday, June 3, from 10:30-11:30 a.m., the Sacred Lands Protection Coalition will host a media briefing in the Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing room (Russell Building 485) to discuss the issue of American Indian sacred lands protection.

The media briefing also is intended to provide background in preparation for the first oversight hearing called by the Committee on the topic of the protection of American Indian Sacred Lands.

The first hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 4, beginning at 10 a.m. in the Senate Indian Affairs Committee hearing room (Russell Building 485). NCAI President Tex G. Hall, who also is Chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation in North Dakota, will be among those testifying.

The Sacred Lands Protection Coalition is a newly formed group with representatives from the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI); the Association on American Indian Affairs; Seventh Generation Fund; Morning Star Institute; the National Trust for Historic Preservation; United South and Eastern Tribes; and the Native American Rights Fund. Since the Coalition's formation in March 2002, it already has been successful in pushing for Congressional oversight hearings (additional hearings are planned).

The Coalition also is seeking legislation to ensure that the U.S. government fulfills its trust responsibilities to American Indians, including the freedom of religion.

"Native people have been fighting for centuries to safeguard their sacred places, with little or no success," said Hall. "It is time that we stand up in unity to protect the places that are so integral to the practice of our religions, to the well being of our cultures and to the overall health of the earth."

For more information about the Sacred Lands Protection Coalition, contact NCAI Legislative Associate Lillian Sparks at (202) 466-7767.

Founded in 1944, the National Congress of American Indians is the country's oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization. NCAI advocates for more than 250 tribal governments with the federal government and the Congress, promoting strong tribal-federal "government-to-government" policy and promoting a better understanding among the general public regarding American Indian and Alaska Native governments, people and rights.

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