

Neighborhood Coalition Honors Cobell with Leadership Award

WASHINGTON – Montana’s Eloise Cobell, who has led a nine-year court fight to force the federal government to give individual Indian Trust beneficiaries a full accounting of their holdings, has been honored by the National Neighborhood Coalition (NNC).

“We are proud to salute Eloise Cobell for her commitment to communities that have been robbed of their most vital assets,” said Anne Pasmanick, executive director of the coalition, an organization that advocates for low-income people and neighborhoods.

Cobell directs the Blackfeet Reservation Fund in Montana and is the lead plaintiff in Cobell vs. Norton. This class-action lawsuit seeks to hold the federal government accountable for lands and monies it held in trust for 500,000 individual Indians.

Citing Cobell’s fight to help Indians recover their lost assets, the NNC presented the Browning, Mont., resident with the Pablo Eisenberg Award for Neighborhood Leadership at a reception April 7.

Cobell’s leadership has guided 500,000 American Indians in their quest for accountability from the federal government, the NNC said. “A banker and activist, Eloise Cobell defies stereotypes and fills both roles with equanimity and enthusiasm,” said Pasmanick.

The NNC was founded in 1979 as the national voice for neighborhoods. We provide common ground for the nation’s leading advocates for lower-income neighborhoods.

NNC is where national and local leaders come together to generate the resources, public policies, and solution-oriented strategies that strengthen and sustain neighborhoods.

NNC’s Annual National and Neighborhood Leadership Awards Reception was sponsored by Freddie Mac, as well as Citigroup, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and Bank of America.

New Bosque Redondo Memorial, a “Site of Conscience,” Opens in June

FORT SUMNER, N.M. – More than 140 years after the infamous Long Walk of the Navajo people and their imprisonment on the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation, the state of New Mexico has established a memorial that recognizes the great human tragedy that occurred here.

The Bosque Redondo Memorial will formally open June 4 at 11 a.m. Hundreds are expected to attend, including Navajo and Mescalero Apache leaders and federal, state, county, and Village of Fort Sumner officials.

“It didn’t get the attention it deserved when it happened, nor has its significance been much noted since outside of the Southwest,” said José Cisneros, state monuments director. “Now we have a memorial that is a fitting tribute to the enduring suffering of the Navajo from 1863 to 1868, and to the Mescalero Apache, who shared their plight.

“Hundreds of the Navajo people died when they were rounded up by the U.S. Army and forced to march from their Four Corners homeland, across most of New Mexico, to Fort Sumner,” Cisneros said. “A third of the population at Bosque Redondo, some 9,000 at its height, succumbed to pneumonia, dysentery, exposure, and starvation.”

The memorial was conceived in 1967 by planners of the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of June 1, 1868, that freed the Navajo and established the Navajo Nation of today.

The Village of Fort Sumner purchased a section of the Bosque Redondo Indian Reservation and deeded it to the state of New Mexico. In 1969, the site was proclaimed a New Mexico State Monument and in 1970, a modest visitor center was constructed to relate the events of the Long Walk period.

But the actual memorial languished until State House and Senate Memorials in 1992 and 1993 respectively spurred the effort along.

The Senate Memorial called for a site at Fort Sumner to “commemorate the Long Walk that the Navajo people took back to their homeland and to commemorate the healing that has taken place since that event.”

On June 14, 2002, the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs signed a Memorandum of Agreement with President Kelsey Begaye of the Navajo Nation and President Sarah Miguez of the Mescalero Reservation authorizing construction of the Bosque Redondo Memorial.

The memorial is located within Fort Sumner State Monument on the south bank of the Pecos River, and was designed by Navajo architect David N. Sloan, who was among those who felt Bosque Redondo needed appropriate recognition.

“There was little to indicate that the Navajo had ever been to Bosque Redondo, when I first visited Bosque Redondo in 1979,” he said. “There was nothing that welcomed Navajo visitors.”

Today, Sloan and his project manager, Delbert Billy, believe Bosque Redondo has become imbued with a long absent “spirit of place” as a result of creative landscaping and a 6,345-square-foot visitor center filled with exhibits that tell the story. The building’s elevated, octagonal entrance faces the rising sun of the winter solstice, signaling rebirth.

Its features include such cultural symbols as circular patterns and markers for the cardinal directions. A circular pathway from the parking area funnels visitors clock-

Lillie Butler – 3/2/05-3/31/05

TC	Ind	Gmg	Tvl		
			13	3/2	Athletic Comm. wkshp.
	21.5			3/3-4	Athletic Comm. wkshp.
			16	3/5	Athletic Comm. wkshp.
5.5	5.5			3/7-8	Education Comm., packets
2.25	2.25	2	2	3/9	STBC, packets
2.75	2.75			3/10	Council interviews, packets
		5.5	5.5	3/11	Council – gaming, wkshp.
5.5	5.5			3/12	Wkshp., packets
4	4		9.5	3/13	Wkshp., wellness conf.
15.75	15.75			3/14-16	Wellness conf.
2	2		10	3/17	Wellness conf.
7.75	7.75			3/18-19	Regular TC
		6.5	2	3/20	Athletic Comm., packets
3.5	3.5	6		3/21-22	Files, packets
2.25	2.25	2	2	3/23	Press conference, sign checks, packets
3	3			3/24-25	Packets, files
3.75	3.75	6		3/28-29	Child care, packets
2	2	1.5	2	3/30	Special TC, packets
2.75	2.75	2		3/31	Personnel hearing, packets

Harvard Opportunities E-Newsletter Available

Opportunities is an e-newsletter compiled by the Harvard University Native American Program that includes internship, scholarship, fellowship, grant, and career opportunities, plus announcements for conferences, workshops, and symposia.

The Harvard University Native American Program provides *Opportunities* as a free information service. To subscribe, please send an e-mail to Majordomo@ksqglist.harvard.edu, in the body write “Subscribe HUNAP *Opportunities*,” followed by your e-mail address.

From the March 2005 issue of In Brief, the newsletter of Oregon’s Legislative Commission on Indian Services

wise through a grove of cottonwoods, mere saplings today, to the entrance. The trees were cloned from a cottonwood planted by the captives.

“The physical landscape, and the plants and animals, dominates the perception of how all tribal groups see themselves in life,” said Sloan.

The Pecos is a key part of the equation. An observation deck on a bend in the river is available so visitors can enjoy both upstream and downstream vistas.

The state and federal government shared in the funding. An initial \$2 million was provided by the U.S. Department of Defense and the state Legislature added \$500,000. Local government contributed in-kind donations of land and buildings totaling \$500,000.

The Village of Fort Sumner donated 61 acres adjacent to the existing 50-acre monument and DeBaca County donated an old fire station for use as a maintenance shed.

“The memorial would never have happened without the strong support of the local community and of our principal stakeholders,” said Scott Smith, monument manager. “Over the past 10 or 12 years, representatives of both the Navajo Nation and the Mescalero Apache Tribe have given generously of their time in order to share their story with us. And it is their story, their history.”

A second phase of construction, which would add a large exhibit hall for a permanent Long Walk exhibit and complete the landscaping, still requires funding.

“Phase I of construction goes a long way toward fulfilling our commitment to commemoration and healing, but the job is not complete,” said Cisneros.

He calls the memorial a “museum of conscience” and compares it to other sites established in recent years to recognize such tragedies as the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado and the Cherokee Trail of Tears.

A companion federal project also is under consideration. In 2003, Congress authorized the National Park Service to study the feasibility of designating the Long Walk routes from the Four Corners area to the Bosque Redondo as a unit of the National Trails System.

“We’re very supportive of the creation of a federally recognized trail,” said Cisneros. “Such a trail would complement the Bosque Redondo Memorial, where the Long Walk ended, and link it to the Navajo homeland in a profoundly positive way.

“The noted Yale historian Robin Winks said that such sites of conscience are ‘places where human abuses occur which are later formally recognized by society in the hope that present and future generations learn never to repeat them,’” he said. “If the Bosque Redondo Memorial and a future Long Walk Trail can move visitors to understand that, then all of humankind will benefit.”