



APACHE TRIBAL MEMBERS RALLY IN WASHINGTON D.C. TO SAVE OAK FLAT FROM MINING

PHOTO: WENDY KENIN

APACHES DISCUSS ARIZONA LAND GRAB AT PIELC

Late on a December night in 2014, Sen. John McCain attached a rider to the National Defense Authorization Act, swapping 2,400 acres of federally owned land for 5,300 acres of land owned by Resolution Copper Mining. San Carlos Apache Tribe Councilman Wendsler Nosie, Sr., and his granddaughter Naelyn Pike will be keynote speakers at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at the UO this week talking about their efforts to regain the land that is sacred to the San Carlos Apache Tribe and the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

Nosie says that amendment, which passed along with the rest of the bill, “gave away our holy mountain.”

The area, known as Oak Flat, just outside the Apache reservation border, is “home to Indigenous Peoples since prehistoric times, a place where acorns and medicinal herbs are gathered and coming-of-age ceremonies are held,” according to *Indian Country Today*.

Resolution Copper is a subsidiary of mining giants Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton, Nosie says. He adds that the Resolution Copper mining plans “have never been in the public” and the company has played up jobs and money. Instead, he says the mining will bring devastation.

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— SAVE OAK FLAT ACT

Nosie says the Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act was “dirty politics,” and the Apache tribal members are coming to PIELC to call attention to the Save Oak Flat Act, which would repeal the land exchange. Arizona Rep. Raul Grijalva introduced the Save Oak Flat Act

in the House as HR 2811 and Bernie Sanders and Tammy Baldwin introduced the bill in the Senate as S. 2242.

The bill says, “Once Resolution Copper owns the Oak Flat area, it plans to use the highly destructive block cave mining method to remove one cubic mile of ore that is now 7,000 feet beneath the surface of the Earth without replacing any of the earth removed because that is the cheapest form of mining.” It adds that the company “admits that the surface will subside and ultimately collapse, destroying forever this place of worship.”

“I’m asking people throughout the country for support, and to get with their congressional leaders in the House and Senate,” Nosie says.

Wendsler Nosie, Sr., and Naelyn Pike, who are members of the group Apache Stronghold, which is fighting the land grab, will speak at PIELC’s closing ceremonies, 12:10 pm Sunday, March 6, in the UO’s EMU ballroom on campus.

For a full schedule of conference events, go to PIELC.org. For more on Oak Flat go to Apache-Stronghold.com.
— Camilla Mortensen

IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

As the vernal equinox passes this month, the spring waves of wildflower blooms increase in breadth and vigor. Like the waves crashing on the beach, they are in constant motion yet precisely defined at any instant. Unlike the waves of the ocean, waves of blooming are so slow the human eye cannot detect any motion. Every flower has a slow but steady dance that one must visualize mentally to appreciate its blossoming. This is what makes time-lapse movies of flowers opening so appealing; they give the impression of inexorable

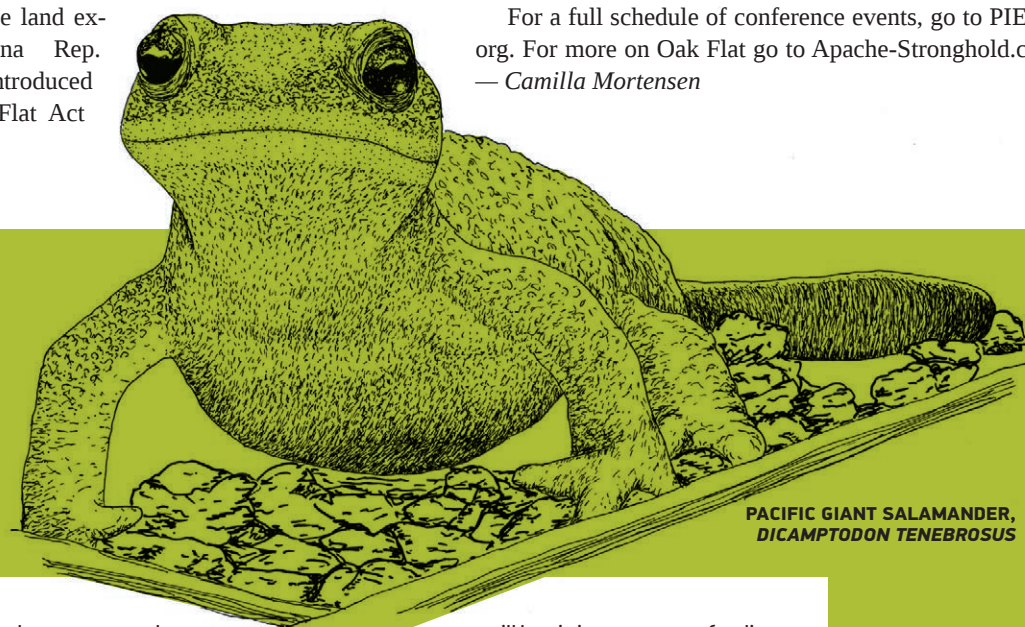
actions being speeded up, constantly moving.

The act of blooming is a flowering plant showing its breeding behavior. It doesn't matter if they are insect pollinated or wind pollinated, the goals are the same: Fertilize the egg and nurture the young of the next generation. The rivers that run to the ocean have their own cycles. The winter steelhead run is almost over. The spring run of Chinook salmon begins next month.

It is much more dramatic watching herons return to their nests. By the end of the month, they

will be sitting on eggs or feeding their young. Other songbirds are already nesting while some are still in the process of establishing a territory and singing for a mate. Frogs, newts and salamander are laying eggs in ponds. Tadpoles and larvae should be observed in ponds and still backwaters by the end of the month. It is important for them to begin early, to avoid being stranded in drying puddles.

David Wagner is a botanist who works in Eugene. He teaches moss classes, leads nature walks and makes calendars. For information on how to get his 2016 Oregon Nature Calendar, contact him at fernzenmosses@me.com.



PACIFIC GIANT SALAMANDER,
DICAMPTODON TENEBROSUS