

Native Hawaiian bill revived

HONOLULU (AP) – Legislation granting Native Hawaiians federally recognized self-government rights is being reintroduced in Congress.

U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka and U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono, both Democrats representing Hawaii, reintroduced versions of the

measure in the Senate and House last week.

The bill is a renewed effort to give Native Hawaiians the same rights already extended to many Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

The measure failed to get a vote in the Senate last year fol-

lowing 11 years of efforts by Akaka to get it passed.

The legislation, known as the Akaka Bill, comes as state lawmakers also are considering proposals to form a Native Hawaiian governing body themselves.

Archeologist slams LA contractor

LOS ANGELES (AP) – An archeologist says the contractor building a garden for a downtown Los Angeles museum on county-owned land mishandled human remains found at the site.

Biola University professor Paul E. Langenwaller made his remarks at a meeting of the state Native American Heritage

Commission Monday.

He says his students were helping Whittier-based Sanberg Group with the excavations after the bones were found in November.

But after he saw remains being haphazardly removed and witnessed heavy machines used for delicate excavation work, he sought to dissociate his school

from the project.

American Indian tribe members believe the 118 sets of bones unearthed at the LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes Mexican-American museum belong to their forebears.

A message left with the Sanberg Group was not returned.



Yvonne Iverson/Spilyay

J.R. Redwater, Shishonia, Gilbert Brown (of Warm Springs) and Jim Ruel brought their comedy to Kah-Nee-Ta in March, as the Chiefs of Comedy.

Park Service to move Little Bighorn records

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) – National Park Service officials said they will move thousands of historic objects and records from Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument to a storage facility in Tucson, Ariz.

Battlefield Superintendent Kate Hammond said the move is temporary until a more secure and permanent repository is established at the battlefield.

The collection of more than 149,000 records and artifacts, including Lt. Col. George A. Custer's uniforms and Sitting

Bull's arrows, are now in the basement of the park's 52-year-old visitor center—a location park officials say is substandard and puts the records at risk of deterioration, fire or flood.

"This temporary relocation will keep the collection together and available for researchers, in the best possible place for its protection and conservation until it can come home to a new museum facility," Hammond said.

The move to the NPS Western Archaeological and Conser-

"If it goes to Tucson, it will never come back. That's the fear."

vation Center will not include museum pieces and photographs already on display in the battlefield visitor center, and Hammond said that even after the move, items from the collection will be rotated through the visitor center displays.

But the plan has met some

opposition.

Former battlefield Superintendent Jim Court said the Custer Battlefield Preservation Commission and the Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association, both of which he belongs to, have offered to pay to have the collection put in the new Big Horn County Museum to keep it close to the battlefield.

"If it goes to Tucson, it will never come back," he said. "That's the fear."

Ground is expected to be

broken on the county museum this week.

Meanwhile, the Crow Tribe has opposed the Park Service's idea to build a new visitors' center and expand the boundaries of the national monument. The tribe fears the expansion would erode its own land base.

The national monument is the site of the iconic June 25, 1876, clash between Custer's 7th Cavalry and a coalition of Indian tribes, most of them Cheyenne and Sioux.

Dig to begin at bridges site

YARDLEY, Pa. (AP) – A dig for Native American artifacts is set to begin on the Pennsylvania side of a bridge that carries Interstate 95 between Bucks County, Pa., and Mercer County, N.J.

The Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission says archaeologists are set to begin excavation work for the dig in Lower Makefield Township this week. It's happening near where a new bridge is set to replace the Scudder Falls Bridge, which carries I-95 across the Delaware.

The commission says about a dozen archaeologists and other scientists will be working at the site, just north of the current Scudder Falls Bridge.

Commission director, Frank McCartney, says there's a possibility of recovering artifacts dating back to when Native Americans first paddled the Delaware River.

Eagle feathers only for Indians

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) – Restricting use of eagle parts and feathers to members of federally recognized American Indian tribes for religious purposes does not violate the religious freedoms of non-Indians seeking the same right, a federal appeals court ruled last week.

The Denver-based U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals found that such a prohibition, under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, does not violate the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The ruling comes after several cases in which non-Indians, and one man from a tribe that is no longer recognized by the federal government, sought the right to use feathers in their religious practices.

Eagle feathers are believed to be sacred among many Native Americans.

Federal law requires that eagle carcasses be sent to the National Eagle Repository in Denver, Colo., and that any tribe member wishing to use eagle feathers or parts in ceremonies apply for a permit to do so. The court noted that the repository "receives significantly more re-

quests than it has available eagle carcasses" so there is already a long waiting period to fulfill permits.

All the cases noted in last week's ruling weighed freedom of religion against the government's ability to protect the eagles and help maintain the centuries-old religious practices of Native Americans.

Federally recognized tribe members agree the law should restrict access to eagle parts to those whose ancestors have been practicing such ceremonies for centuries.

"As Native people, we appreciate that others want to understand our philosophies, understand the sacredness of things. And I understand that many non-natives are looking for spirituality and looking for something sacred to hold onto," said Lacey A. Harris, a Northern Ute medicine man and mental health therapist in Salt Lake City.

However, Harris likened non-Indians' wanting to possess indigenous sacred objects to an outsider entering a Christian church and trying to perform that religion's ceremonies.

"To us, this is a very sacred

thing," he said.

The cases cited in last week's ruling include that of Samuel Ray Wilgus Jr., who claims to be an adopted member of Utah's Paiute Indian Peak Band.

During a traffic stop in 1998 near the town of Fillmore, about 150 miles south of Salt Lake City, authorities seized more than 100 eagle feathers from him. He was later charged with possessing the feathers without a permit, and pleaded guilty with the provision that he could appeal.

Wilgus was sentenced to 100 hours of community service, but maintained that it was a violation of his religious freedoms.

A district court disagreed, but the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals at the time reversed the decision and ordered a hearing on whether the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act was "the least restrictive means of serving the government's interests."

The district court then found that the act did indeed violate Wilgus's rights to religious freedom.

The appeals court now overturns that ruling.

Meeting set over nickname

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) – A meeting between state officials and the NCAA will address the University of North Dakota's nickname and logo that the athletics association wants dropped.

Board of Higher Education Vice President Grant Shaft told the Grand Forks Herald that the NCAA president has committed to attend. Shaft said the governor and other state officials,

university officials and legislative leaders have been invited to the April 22 meeting in Bismarck.

The Board of Higher Education last year directed UND to drop the Fighting Sioux nickname and Indian head logo, which the NCAA considers hostile to American Indians.

The governor signed a bill passed by the Legislature this year that requires the university to keep them.

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