

NATIVE NEWS FROM ACROSS THE NATION

Senate wants 'Squaw' Removed from Names of Landmarks

"We might not be able to change our past, but we can certainly improve our future."

~ Kate Brown
Senate Democratic Floor Leader

SALEM, OR. (AP) — The Oregon Senate has voted to remove the word "squaw" from the names of landmarks and public property in Oregon because it is demeaning to Indian women.

One of two bills approved recently would urge the Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names and the Oregon Geographic Names Board to remove the word from various geographic areas and sites.

The other would require cities and counties to eventually rename streets, public buildings and parks that bear the word "squaw."

Senate Democratic Floor Leader Kate Brown of Portland, who sponsored both measures, said the word "squaw" is extremely derogatory and should no longer be used.

"We might not be able to change our past, but we can certainly im-

prove our future," she said.

Senator Roger Beyer, R-Mollala, who said he thought they would saddle state and local governments with unnecessary costs, cast the only vote against the two measures.

It was the same argument used by some Republicans in an Idaho State House committee that killed Senate-passed legislation to remove the word "squaw" from 93 Idaho place names.

American Indian Groups Celebrate Reclamation of Sacred Mountain

FLAGSTAFF, AZ. (AP) — Joe Galarza has seen land deemed sacred by American Indians taken and used for economic gain before. But recently he saw something new — witnessing someone giving back that land.

Galarza and about two dozen fellow American Indians stood on the snowcapped San Francisco Peaks and prayed in front of silent tractors and a 50-foot pile of pumice that was taken from an abandoned mine in the mountain.

Under an agreement approved by Congress last October, Phoenix-based Tufflite Inc. agreed to stop extracting pumice from the White Vulcan mine on the slopes of Northern Arizona's highest mountain in exchange for \$1 million.

"It's pretty big for us because it affects all 13 Southwest Tribes," said Galarza, an Ysleta Indian who drove from Los Angeles to attend the celebration. "This victory is going to empower all the people."

Tufflite's agreement allows the company until August 2010 to use

"This is our home and we'll always fight to protect it. If we don't fight, then we're submitting, and that's going to be the end of us."

~ Joe Galarza

the more than 500,000 tons of already mined pumice valued at \$12-\$15 million. Pumice is used in making concrete and stonewash jeans.

The company also agreed to relinquish its 49 mining claims in the area.

The peaks make up one of four sacred mountains in the Southwest for American Indian Tribes, who come to the mountain to pray.

The Hopi consider it home to spirits who take the form of rain clouds. To the Havasupai, the mountain carries songs and prayers up to the higher spirit.

Kelvin Long, a Navajo and representative of the Native American Project for Community Organizing, said Tribes seek out plants on the ex-

tinct volcano that can't be found elsewhere.

But he said it's not just American Indians who come to the mountains. It also attracts hikers, skiers and bird watchers.

"People have been drawn to Flagstaff because of the peaks," Long said.

The mountain range will remain safe from future mining or use because of a 20-year withdrawal period that covers 74,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service land, said Ken Jacobs, a spokesman for Coconino National Forest, which surrounds the mountain.

He said the 1872 mining law still makes land management difficult. Tufflite operated under the law, which allows companies to buy land for as little as \$2.50 an acre to mine hard rock minerals such as gold, silver and copper. Companies are not required to pay royalties to the government for the minerals.

Jacobs said Department of Interior and Agriculture officials — who both worked on the agreement — came to an important realization about the cultural and recreational value of the land that outweighed the worth of the pumice.

American Indian groups and the Sierra Club say they will continue to ensure their hallowed lands remain free from development.

"This is our home and we'll always fight to protect it," Galarza said. "If we don't fight, then we're submitting, and that's going to be the end of us."

On the Net:

Coconino National Forest: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino>

Bill would Compensate Tribes for Missouri River Losses

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — The Yankton Sioux and Santee Sioux Tribes would share nearly \$28 million for losses related to Missouri River development under legislation introduced in Congress.

It would compensate the two Tribes for the cultural and economic losses suffered when more than 4,000 acres were flooded by the building of the Fort Randall and Gavin's Point dams in the 1950s.

South Dakota Senators Tom Daschle and Tim Johnson and Nebraska Sen. Chuck Hagel introduced the bill recently.

Daschle said the measure would create a trust fund of \$23 million for the Yankton Sioux Tribe and \$4.7 million for the Santee Sioux Tribe to offset their loss of land, the adverse impact on their communities and the forced resettlement of families.

Congress has passed similar bills for other Tribes located along the Missouri River.

Navajos Welcome Convicted Former Nation President Home from Prison

TUBA CITY, AZ. (AP) — Hundreds of well wishers lined the muddy streets here recently to celebrate former Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald's release from prison and this time they got to see and hear the man they came to welcome home.

"Not many people know what it's like behind that wall," MacDonald told about 200 supporters who jammed the small Tonanees'dizi Chapter House and 200 more who listened outside on a speaker system or pressed their faces to windows and open doors. "I was fortunate to come back from that place alive," said MacDonald. "I would not wish that on even my worst enemy what's behind that wall."

MacDonald, 72, led America's largest Indian Tribe off and on throughout the 1970s and '80s. The Navajo Tribal Council removed him from office amid a corruption scandal in 1989, and months later a group of his supporters stormed the Tribal headquarters in Window Rock in an attempt to restore him to power.

Tribal police opened fire, and two MacDonald supporters died.

MacDonald was convicted on federal conspiracy charges for inciting the riot and for taking bribes and kickbacks. He has maintained his innocence and resisted making a public apology.

The Navajo Tribal Council pardoned MacDonald in 1995.

Former President Bill Clinton commuted MacDonald's sentence on January 20, freeing him from the Federal Medical Center in Fort Worth, Texas. He had served over half his 14-year sentence.

Supporters gathered for a homecoming celebration in Farmington, N.M., last month, but MacDonald was unable to attend due to his poor health. He had a heart attack in the mid-1990s and underwent quadruple bypass surgery in 1999.

The gathering in the small reservation town of Tuba City, a community 80 miles north of Flagstaff where MacDonald now lives, started with a parade. A smiling MacDonald rode in the back of a pickup truck with his wife, Wanda, waving throughout the two-mile route.

After the parade, the crowd squeezed into the chapter house and crowded outside to listen while presenters, including Navajo Vice President Dr. Taylor MacKenzie, cheered MacDonald's return.

"It's such a great feeling. It's like, Yeah! There's a great weight lifted off your chest," James Bilagody, a Navajo Councilman from Tuba City said. "He's home. I've dreamt of this

moment for so many years."

Much of the presentation and discussion was in Navajo, interspersed with bits of English.

MacDonald shared stories about waiting for word on his release.

He spent much of his time thanking people for their letters, prayers and support. "It's good to be home. It's good to be with my wife, my children, my friends," he said. "I can't thank you enough for all you have done to help me regain my freedom."

MacDonald also encouraged Navajos to pull together now that his prison sentence is over.

"Working together, respecting each other's dignity, that's what we need to get to an ever higher level than we were before," he said.

While MacDonald's troubles have been a source of great division within the Tribe, no protesters showed up during the event.

Vern Lee of Farmington, N.M., who was active in pushing for MacDonald's release, said he hopes the Tribe can reconcile those differences with forgiveness and compassion.

"I tell them, reach out to those guys who are still angry and hurt," Lee said. "That's (the) Navajo way. Do your part. We haven't done that for many, many years."