



NOV 04 2013

Dear Tribal Leader:

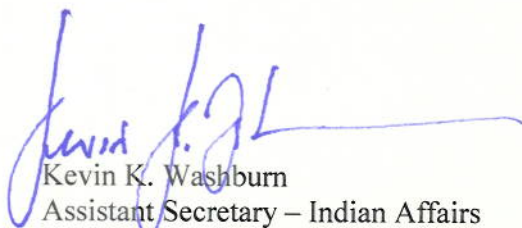
In response to concerns expressed by tribal leaders, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Energy, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have committed to working together to improve the protection of and tribal access to sacred sites under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). One of the guiding principles of this work is that tribal input and consultation is essential to ensure the development of meaningful strategies for sacred sites protection.

The Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation invite you to participate in a listening session in conjunction with the White House Tribal Nations Conference:

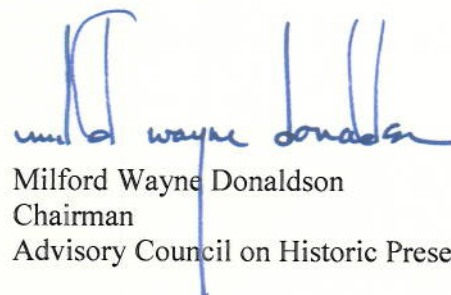
November 14, 2013
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Room 5160
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Should you be unable to attend in person but would like to hear the session via telephone, please dial 1-877-416-8831, participant code 28224295. This listening session will provide an opportunity for continued dialogue on sacred sites issues and your input in the work being carried out under the MOU. We will provide you with an update on our progress in implementing the MOU and our plans for next steps. We look forward to your input.

Please RSVP to Ms. Alberta Joseph at alberta_joseph@ios.doi.gov. If you are unable to attend this listening session, please send your comments via email to consultation@bia.gov with "sacred sites" in the subject line or by mail to Ms. Kathryn Isom-Clause, Counselor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, 1849 C Street, NW, MS 3071-MIB, Washington, DC 20240. Further updates will be posted online at <http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/Consultation/index.htm>. Thank you for your participation and input.


Kevin K. Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sincerely,


Milford Wayne Donaldson
Chairman
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

Enclosure

On December 5, 2012, the Departments of the Interior, Defense, Agriculture, and Energy and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to improve the protection of and Indian access to sacred sites through interagency coordination and collaboration. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack included an announcement about this historic MOU at the 2012 White House Tribal Nations Conference in his remarks.

The MOU is a 5-year commitment by the signatories to carry out specific action items as well as a review of existing federal authorities. The action items revolve around 5 themes including training and guidance; management practices and capacity building; confidentiality of information; communication; and policy review. The MOU also commits the signatories to consult with Indian tribes in developing and implementing the action items.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2013:

- A staff level working group, called the Core Working Group, was immediately established to facilitate implementation of the MOU and to develop the action plan called for in the MOU.
- The Core Working Group began initial public outreach efforts through email and in-person briefings.
- The action plan was released on March 5, 2013 and established an executive working group of policy-level officials from each of the signatories.
- The Core Working Group began implementation of the Action Plan. Each of the signatories also identified subject matter experts within their departments to assist with implementation. Five working groups carry out the tasks under the MOU and Action Plan:
 - Training
 - Confidentiality Standards
 - Management Practices and Capacity Building
 - Public Outreach and Communications
 - Policy Review

PROGRESS REPORT:

The signatories will issue an annual progress report outlining each year's accomplishments. The 2013 report was in production and scheduled for release by the White House Tribal Nations Conference on November 13, 2013. Due to the lapse in appropriations which caused a partial government shutdown, the signatories were unable to meet this deadline. However, the progress report will be issued in mid to late December 2013. It will be posted at <http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/sacredsitesmou.shtml> and www.achp.gov. Notice of the availability of the report will be sent via email to tribal leaders.

NEXT STEPS FOR 2014:

The MOU commits the signatories to consult with Indian tribes in developing and implementing the specific actions or tasks. While the focus of the MOU is coordination and collaboration among the signatories, the MOU does require the development of substantive products such as guidance, training, and public outreach information. The signatories anticipate consulting with Indian tribes regarding the substance of such products. In 2014, the signatories will develop a plan for tribal consultation, post it on the web sites indicated above, and provide it to tribal leaders via email.