

APACHE STRONGHOLD

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FOREST SERVICE PUTS SACRED OAK FLAT LAND GIVEAWAY ON TEMPORARY HOLD "FOR SEVERAL MONTHS."

OAK FLAT, Ariz. – The Forest Service announced this morning that it will "rescind" January 15, 2021, Final Environmental Impact Statement which triggered the 60 day time clock to the Oak Flat giveaway (<https://www.resolutionmineeis.us/>). But the Forest Service added that "consultations such as this generally take several months."

"They are just attempting a temporary strategic retreat," said Apache Stronghold leader and former San Carlos Apache Tribal Chairman Dr. Wendsler Nosie, Sr. "they still intend to try and give away our sacred land."

Apache Stronghold attorney Luke Goodrich from Becket (<https://www.becketlaw.org/>) said, "The Government just announced it is rescinding the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Oak Flat—six hours before its deadline to reply to Apache Stronghold's emergency appeal. This is no coincidence. The Government knows the destruction of Oak Flat violates federal law. It knows it can't justify it in court. So it is retreating--temporarily. But a temporary retreat doesn't solve the problem. The Government is still planning on transfer and destruction of Oak Flat. Oak Flat still needs legal protection. And if the Government is acting in good faith, it should not oppose a court order protecting Oak Flat while the litigation proceeds."

The U.S. District Court did find that "[t]he spiritual importance of Oak Flat to the Western Apaches cannot be overstated" and that the impending destruction of Oak Flat "will completely devastate the Western Apaches' spiritual lifeblood." However, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals still needs to overturn the inappropriate District Court ruling that the Apache have no Constitutional religious rights protections and that the U.S. Government has no Trust Responsibility to the Apache even though their Treaty of 1852 guarantees the Apache "prosperity and happiness."

“Oak Flat is still on death row,” said Apache Stronghold attorney Michael Nixon, “The Forest Service's decision is welcome but doesn't have much impact, they are just changing the execution date.” ([USDA puts brakes on land transfer for Arizona copper mine \(apnews.com\)](#))

After destroying the Juukan Gorge sacred site in Australia on May 20, 2020, this past summer, on December 9, 2020, Rio Tinto Chairman Simon Thompson promised, “As a business, we are committed to learning from this event to ensure the destruction of heritage sites of such exceptional archaeological and cultural significance never occurs again.”

(<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20201209005418/en/Rio-Tinto-acknowledges-interim-report-from-Australian-Parliamentary-Committee>)

Today's announcement does nothing to change the fact that Rio Tinto and the Forest Service still intend on giving away Oak Flat. They are just trying to tap the breaks a bit as they still move to their goal of repeating their Juukan Gorge travesty at Oak Flat.

More info at: <http://apache-stronghold.com/about-us.html> ; Instagram: @protectoakflat ; Twitter: @SaveOakFlat .