

PUBLIC LANDS, SACRED SITES, AND NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

Energy Development on Public Lands

- The federal government owns and manages approximately 635-640 million acres of land in the U.S.¹
- The Bureau of Land Management manages 248 million of those acres and the US Forest Service manages another 193 million acres, most of which are in the West and are home to many sacred sites.²
- In 2012, domestic oil production climbed to the highest level in 15 years and natural gas production reached an all-time high.³
- As part of this effort, the Obama administration has been leasing public lands for oil and gas development at more than 2.5 times faster than it is protecting them as parks, wilderness, and national monuments.⁴
- Last Congress was the first Congress since World War II not to protect a single new acre of public land as a national park, wilderness, wildlife refuge, or monument.⁵

Native American Tribes and Sacred Sites

- Although new energy development has lessened the US's dependence on foreign oil and created jobs, there are fears that the speed and scope of this development will ultimately harm public lands, particularly those containing sites held sacred by tribes.⁶
- Tribes such as the Hopi of Arizona, fearful of the adverse impacts of oil and gas drilling on leased public lands and their sacred sites like Chaco Canyon, continue to push for protection.⁷
- Recently tribes have won victories with regard to sacred sites, including leading the way for the protection of Chimney Rock and the Rio Grande del Norte – both of which were protected by President Obama under the Antiquities Act.⁸

Native American Youth Engagement

- To help ensure that rich tribal cultural and spiritual practices continue, young Native Americans must also play a role in this effort.
- Youth from throughout Indian Country are already actively advocating for the protection of sacred sites for their generation and the generations to come, and it is important to carry their messages to policy-makers.

NATIVE YOUTH VOICES

"As a first American...I will continue to fight for the preservation of these remaining spaces of magic: our public lands." – Mariah Gladstone, 19, Blackfeet/Cherokee

"As Native Nations, we continue to look forward to tomorrow and we persevere in our fight to protect our existence, which includes the preservation of sacred sites." – Lemanuel Loley, 19, Navajo

"[Chief Mountain] is very important and sacred to us... [b]ut, our council is trying to drill out oil...and we're the ones paying the price!" – Dulci Skunk Cap, 10, Blackfeet

"Who we are and where we are from are the same thing to Indian people." – Bethany Henry, 23, Cherokee

"Mount Graham, Dzil NChaa Sian. It is my home, this is where my ancestors were from. I have made a spiritual connection to this holy place. I cannot explain it with words." – Naelyn Pike, 14, San Carlos Apache

"The preservation of public lands ultimately signifies saving a part of ourselves." – Anjelica Gallegos, 21, Jicarilla Apache/Pueblo of Santa Ana

"The fracturing of oil can cause perilous chemicals-used to retrieve natural gases from the ground-to contaminate the natural water systems on Native land." – Danielle Cornelius, 18, Navajo/Oneida

¹ <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf>

² <http://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R42346.pdf>

³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/energy/securing-american-energy>

⁴ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/158484902/A-Blueprint-for-Balance>

⁵ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/158484902/A-Blueprint-for-Balance>

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffOpPnfW0lo>

⁷ http://www.daily-times.com/ci_23930872/hopi-tribe-criticizes-prospect-drilling-near-chaco-canyon

⁸ <http://www.durangoherald.com/article/20120921/NEWS01/120929872/Presidential-proclamation-creates-Chimney-Rock-monument>