



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Proof Trump is desecrating our ancestors

written by Zola Fish

August 23, 2020



Kumeyaay ancestral burial and sacred sites desecrated to make way for a wall along the Southern border

On Aug. 19, a group of Kumeyaay Natives and local activists went out into the 105-degree heat to hold a Sacred Space prayer circle at a Kumeyaay ancestral burial ground and ancient village at the U.S.-Mexico border. The line is now spray painted by the Border Patrol to remind us not to cross.

We met early in the morning and caravanned up the mountain to be met by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) drilling into Mother Earth to plant dynamite to blow up the Kumeyaay ancestors and their historical villages for the wall of white supremacy. We held circle and prayed at many different sites and at each site the ACOE had to stop all work.

Due to the efforts of some dynamic female youth leaders from the La Posta Band of Diegueno Mission Indians, one of the twelve bands of the Kumeyaay Ipai, Tipai Nation, the ACOE is behind schedule, three weeks now.

The Kumeyaay have historically lived in the San Diego border region for over 12,000 years. Places along the border line play a part in their creation story. Among places scheduled to be dynamited and dug up, then filled with concrete and steel, is an ancestral cemetery near the community of Jacumba. The Kumeyaay believe there are souls attached to bones and the bones are being desecrated so the U.S. president can get his monument to himself and to white supremacy.



Midden soil, the dark layer on top, has been found where the ACOE is currently working.

Midden soil has been found where the ACOE is currently working. Within the midden soil is proof that this land has always been Native. The artifacts found in

midden soil tell a story of villages, religious life and cemeteries of the Kumeyaay ancestors. Middens are an archive of ancient lifestyles and environments. Middens can preserve a record of a thousand years of ancestral occupation.

There is proof of what the Kumeyaay have been trying to tell the government. Protesters were told the ACOE would be skipping a consultation with the tribe for "national security reasons." On several days, there was work with no Native monitor on site.

The La Posta Band of Digueno Mission Indians filed a lawsuit to get an injunction to stop all work at the wall. The lawsuit was filed against the Trump administration; Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, who oversaw the military funds diverted from the military to the border wall; Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolf; and Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, commander general of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

The lawsuit states: "Defendants are currently constructing the border wall directly through Kumeyaay Burial Sites and Sacred Lands, causing irreversible and easily avoidable damage to Kumeyaay remains, cultural items, history and religious practice."

More of the court filings say: "Since the arrival of Europeans in the region, the Kumeyaay territory, culture, religion and very existence have been under attack to make way for non-Indian settlement. In the most recent episode of Indigenous erasure, the President of the United States and his administration are desecrating Kumeyaay ancestral burial and sacred sites to make way for a wall along the Southern border."

Another part of the lawsuit says the construction is "excavating and desecrating Kumeyaay remains and prohibiting Tribal members from properly treating the remains and participating in religious ceremonies at the Tribe's sacred sites where the border wall construction is taking place." It further states that no tribal

consultation has taken place between the federal government and the tribe.

The lawsuit was announced by Save the Homelands of the Indigenous and End Land Desecration (SHIELD), a coalition of advocates battling the Trump administration's construction of a border wall on sacred Kumeyaay sites and burial grounds.

"We cannot sit back and continue to watch the bones of our ancestors being dug up and strewn about like random debris. Ancestral Kumeyaay burials are being impacted, and construction continues to tear through our former village sites along the border wall areas," Cynthia Parada, spokeswoman for SHIELD and council member with the La Posta tribe, said.

"With no prior consideration or attempt to mitigate impacts, our sacred sites are being carved into and desecrated for construction of the Border Wall. We have asked for formal government-to-government consultation, yet the Border Patrol and Army Corps of Engineers continue to move forward with grading and bulldozing through our ancestral lands. With no other options, we now ask the court to intervene and stop the construction so that consultation can take place to mitigate the impacts to our sacred sites," Parada continues.

In a [statement published in the San Diego Union Tribune](#), Jeff Stephenson, the supervisory agent for the U.S. Border Patrol's San Diego sector, said, "No biological, cultural or historical sites were identified within the blasting area located within the Roosevelt Reservation."

The "Roosevelt Reservation" Is not a Native reservation. President Theodore Roosevelt created it in 1907 to discourage smuggling. It is a 60-foot-wide piece of land owned by the federal government that runs for 2,000 miles down the U.S.-Mexico border. Federal and Tribal lands make up about one-third of the Roosevelt Reservation and private and state owned lands make up the other two-thirds. The current monitor is from the ACOE and is using a 10-year-old survey done by the

ACOE. They claim there are no burial sites being interrupted. If that's true, then why not allow a monitor from the Kumeyaay Nation?

The protests will continue until the Kumeyaay ancestors are no longer being dug up and desecrated. The struggle against colonization is an ongoing struggle that Native peoples have been fighting since the beginning of the genocide of our people. The fight for liberation, freedom and justice is an uphill battle against the anti-Indian, anti-Immigrant, pro-wall, pro-Trump sentiment. The struggle continues.

