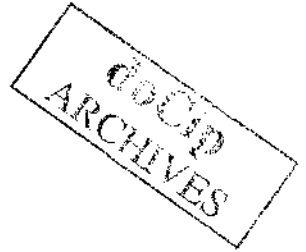


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May 12, 2004

Seventh Generation Fund

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The United Nations
Economic & Social Council
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Third Session in New York USA, May 10-21, 2004

Dear Members of the Permanent Forum

We express our gratitude for your service to Indigenous Peoples and will work with you to meet the difficult challenges to lessen the suffering of the oppressed of this world.

My name is Rosalie Little Thunder. I am a member of the Sicangu Band of the Lakota Nation in North America. I speak of behalf of the Seventh Generation Fund, Tetunwan Sioux Nation Treaty Council, and the American Indian Law Alliance under the agenda item on CULTURE.

We respectfully advise the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues of our desire and intention to initiate, with interested NGO's and Indigenous Peoples, a global campaign on the Protection of Sacred Species. We appeal to the Permanent Forum to participate and to further enlist the support of UNESCO, UNEP, and other specialized agencies in the following endeavors:

1. Disburse information concerning this campaign to Indigenous People,
2. Collect testimonies from Indigenous Peoples concerning the status of their cultures' Sacred Species through regional efforts,
3. Prepare and disburse a global report on the status of Sacred Species,
4. Facilitate the development of appropriate strategies and advocate for the protection of Sacred Species.

Sacred Species are revered by Indigenous cultures all over this world. These relationships are not casual, but evolved over thousands of years of co-existence and dependence upon the Natural World under Natural Law.

For the Lakota People, Tatanka; the buffalo were much more than just a source of sustenance. In another time, in dim history, the Lakota evolved from buffalo and there was a compact made between them; that Tatanka would sustain them, but they must not forget to honor this obligation to Tatanka.

Through the eyes of many generations, Lakota people saw how Tatanka made its offerings to Mother Earth. Tatanka carried the seeds of plants in its belly and its long wool and scattered the seeds to other places, assuring the distribution and diversity of the rooted ones. Tatanka prepared the Earth for plant proliferation by loosening the soil with thousands of sharp hooves and by offering nutrients. The trembling energy of Tatanka's massive movement stimulated the underground water levels and attracted the thunder beings, bringing necessary rain upon Mother Earth. Tatanka contributed significantly to the existence of other species. The Lakota moved with and learned from Tatanka how to live gently upon Mother Earth, not to destroy her, but to contribute to her well being, not to disrupt other beings but to respect them in passing, not to tremble in fear of the unknown, but to find comfort in Natural Law.

In the 1800's, European settlers came at odds with the original inhabitants with Turtle Island. The elusive Plains people needed to be captured, confined, and slaughtered in order for European conquest to be complete. In three short decades, in order to eliminate the food source of the Plains Peoples and subjugate them, the U.S. Army and its mercenaries, slaughtered nearly 60 million buffalo. In the name of humanity's comforts, similar tragic stories echo throughout the world.

23 wild buffalo survived in what is now Yellowstone National Park. Today, their descendants are under brutal assault again. Indigenous Peoples have raised their voice against the continuing slaughter, but even the courts of justice have failed to protect the buffalo.

We hold a prophecy that as long as there are buffalo, people will survive. This prophecy is relevant to all Sacred Species and all of humanity. We must be responsible beyond ourselves. The Lakota, in honoring their obligation to Tatanka, as one of the Keepers of Natural Law, humbly ask for the support of all Indigenous Peoples to honor all Keepers of Natural Law through a global campaign to protect Sacred Species.

Thank you for your precious time and your attention to this appeal.

Mitakuye Oyas'in, We Are All Related