

Canadian Mining Company Threatens Western Shoshone Hot Spring

September 8th, 1996

The Dann family of the Western Shoshone Nation, the Western Shoshone Defense Project, and the Western Shoshone National Council are asking for your immediate assistance in protecting a site of cultural/spiritual significance.

Oro Nevada Mining Company has filed a Notice of Intent with the Bureau of Land Management to conduct exploratory drilling for gold directly on top of a hot spring located approximately one mile south of the Dann ranch in Crescent Valley, Nevada. **The drilling is scheduled to start in early September and may begin any day now.** The Danns and the W.S.N.C. have informed the B.L.M. and the mining company that the hot spring and the surrounding area is extremely important spiritually and culturally and requested that it not be disturbed by mining activity. In response to these requests, Oro Nevada has repeatedly misled Western Shoshone representatives and moved forward with their exploration plans. Past exploratory drilling has destroyed other hot springs in the area. The hot spring adjacent to the Dann Ranch is especially vulnerable because of its low flow. The intrusion of mining activity onto this sacred area represents an attack on freedom of religion, a right guaranteed by the United States Constitution. **Public pressure must be applied to force the BLM and Oro Nevada to respect the rights of the Western Shoshone and preserve their cultural sites.**

Background

The U.S. Constitution states that treaties, agreements between sovereign nations, are the supreme law of the land. The 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley between the U.S. and the Western Shoshone Nation remains in effect, affirming the sovereign status of the Western Shoshone and recognizing the boundaries of their territory. The destruction of cultural sites and water sources was clearly not intended to be permitted through the Treaty of Ruby Valley. Oro Nevada's activities fall within the boundaries of the Western Shoshone Nation and violate the intent of the Treaty and the U.S. Constitution.

Oro Nevada Mining Company first appeared in the Crescent Valley area in March 1996, staking claims on most of the so-called public lands surrounding the Dann ranch. From the outset, the Dann sisters and the National Council made it clear that claim stakes and other mining activities are not permitted in the hot springs area. Oro President agreed to this demand, yet continued to order his contractors to work in the hot springs area. In July 1996 Oro Nevada purchased the neighboring Dean Ranch, 48,276 acres of private land spread across the Dann's traditional use area. **In total, Oro Nevada controls over 94,000 acres of land in the Crescent Valley area.** Despite Oro's impressive land acquisition, they continue to insist that Oro is a small, Nevada-based company. Yet, research has revealed that Oro Nevada is completely owned by Oro Nevada Resources Inc. of Toronto, Ontario Canada and is selling stock through the MVP Capital Corporation, also of Toronto. They were able to raise 40 million dollars almost overnight to fund the purchase of the Dean Ranch and their exploration activities in Crescent Valley. One of the founding directors is a wealthy Canadian geologist, Ian Parks, who has connections with mining ventures around the world. While Oro Nevada Mining Co. may be a Nevada-based company, it is clear that wealthy interests are the driving force behind the aggressive development.

The Danns live in one of the few areas surrounding the world famous "Carlin Trend" ore body that has not been extensively explored or impacted by gold mining ventures.

Oro Nevada's activities represent the final invasion of transnational gold mining ventures on the traditional lands of the Dann family. **The potential of these activities to destroy the hot spring and other cultural sites represents not only an attack on the Dann family but on the cultural integrity of the Western Shoshone Nation.** The destruction of sacred sites is an attempt at the destruction of the spirit. These acts constitute genocide against the Western Shoshone Nation.

What We Are Asking

1. Phone calls, faxes and letters are needed to the BLM and Oro Nevada. Calls and faxes are better because of the immediacy of the situation. Important points to make are:

- The Danns and the Western Shoshone National Council have asked that no drilling or other mining activities occur in Section 10, Township 28 North, Range 49 East, the area containing the hot spring. The United States government has still failed to provide documentation on how they acquired legal title to Western Shoshone lands. Until they prove title has been legally transferred, the Western Shoshone retain their rights and responsibilities towards their traditional territory. Mining companies and the Federal government must respect the wishes of the Dann family and the Western Shoshone Nation.
- The U.S. Constitution guarantees the freedom of religion. This freedom is meaningless if the sites connected to the practice of the religion are destroyed. Other laws protecting cultural sites such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act have been ignored in regards to the drilling around the hot spring.
- Hot springs are rare and represent places of very significant cultural and spiritual value to the Western Shoshone. If a hot spring is destroyed it cannot be replaced. Drilling has damaged or destroyed hot springs near the Dann's in the past. The destruction of

these sacred places represents a continued genocide against the Western Shoshone.

- You support the Western Shoshone in their desire for the hot spring and other cultural areas to remain undisturbed.

The following individuals and companies should be contacted immediately and frequently:

Anne Morgan
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
850 Harvard Way
P.O. Box 12000
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006
phone: 702-785-6400
fax: 702-785-6411

Helen Hankins
District Manager
Elko BLM
P.O. 831
Elko, Nevada 89803
phone: 702-753-0200
fax: 702-753-0255

Robert Allen Jones
President
Oro Nevada Mining Company
6490 South McCarran Blvd.
Building D-1, Suite 34
Reno, Nevada 89509
phone: 702-825-7499
fax: 702-825-5277

Peter M. Slocombe
Investment Manager
Oro Nevada Resources Inc.
20 Adelaide St. East
Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2T6
phone: 416-368-2985
fax: 416-368-5201

Margaret Jamieson
MVP Capital Corp.
Box 28
20 Adelaide St. East, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2T6
phone: 416-867-1100
fax: 416-867-1109

Western Shoshone Defense Project
P.O. Box 211106
Crescent Valley, NV 89821
phone: 702-468-0230
fax: 702-468-0237

2. People may be needed to participate in protests or non-violent civil disobedience to protect the hot spring and other cultural sites in the area. This would be a last resort if other avenues fail to persuade the BLM or Oro Nevada. **Call us if you can come out to Crescent Valley to assist.** Please remember that the Western Shoshone continue to abide by the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley, a treaty of "Peace and Friendship" with the United States. We are committed to non-violence. Firearms, drugs and

alcohol are strictly prohibited! Please call first if you can come out.

3. Donations of money and office supplies are always needed. **Research** is needed on Oro Nevada and its Canadian relations. We are especially interested in discovering what individuals and/or companies have invested in Oro Nevada Resources Inc. or MVP Capital Corp.

Please contact the W.S.D.P for more information!

How this all ties together

The situation in Crescent Valley is not unique except that it represents an assault on the spirit of a family who has sacrificed much for their nation. The pain of seeing your history dug up and destroyed is spread all across Newe Sogobia. **Over sixty per cent of the U.S.'s gold is produced in the northeastern corner of Nevada.** Just north of Crescent Valley, near Beowawe, Santa Fe Pacific Gold Corporation is moving forward with its Mule Canyon Mine. The area contains over 100 cultural sites, 31 of which have been excavated without the permission or knowledge of Western Shoshone people. Many more will be destroyed by the mine. The same company has several other mines to the west and northwest of Battle Mountain which have dried up both hot and cold water springs. On neighboring Goshute lands in the Snake Mountains, the U.S. Forest Service has permitted a mining project which they readily admit damages a "traditional cultural property." In Central Nevada a historic Western Shoshone burial area will be consumed in a mine expansion. In other instances the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have told the Newe that it is impossible to stop a mine and that they shouldn't bother trying.

All of this is permitted to happen by a Federal government which is unwilling to recognize the legal and moral rights and responsibilities of the Western Shoshone people to their homelands. This destructive practice of gold mining is fueled by a law written in 1872 which gives the mines a "right" to mine on public lands. Thus we have trans-national companies with a "right" to tear apart the lands of the Western Shoshone,

the people who have no "rights" to protect their ancestors' graves from being removed to make way for mining, who have no rights to protect their cultural sites from being destroyed, who have no rights to protect the water which represents the source of all life. That is what we have been told by the State and Federal government.

Despite the overwhelming forces arrayed against us, we will continue to stand behind those Western Shoshone willing to speak up for their lands, ancestors, relatives, and descendants. We will continue to assist in any way we can, and to speak truth to those who care not listen. **The U.S. public must be made aware of the continuing genocide against the Indian people and they must be held accountable!**

Please Note

- **The WSDP is undergoing severe financial constraints.** Our part time coordinator, Bernice Lalo, was laid off at the beginning of July for lack of funds. Your important contribution will enable the Defense Project to continue its vital work to support the Western Shoshone Nation's struggle for land rights, sovereignty and environmental justice.
- **The WSDP will be organizing a speaking tour this fall and winter with Carrie Dann and other Western Shoshone speakers.** If your organization, event or school is interested in hosting a Shoshone speaker, please contact us as soon as possible.
- **We are updating our mailing list.** If you know someone who used to or should receive our mailings, but doesn't, drop us a note with their address.
- **The WSDP has e-mail and web-pages!** Thanks to the Institute for Global Communication, we have an e-mail address at: ccdemo01@igc.org **Please send us your e-mail addresses.** We also have Web pages that were generously put together by the Alpha Institute and Planet Peace. The Alpha address is <http://www.alphaicdc/wsdp>. The Planet Peace page should be up soon, keep checking.

