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Carol Rose' words in the February 10, 2022 federal consultation at Oak Flat

May the words of our mouths not come up empty. May hearts open and actions bring change.
Protect this land, dear God.

Elders, Chairman, Apache Stronghold, Thank you for inviting me to this sacred place and struggle.

I speak to you, representatives of the United States government, that's a large thing to bring on your shoulders. And you are human beings. God has brought you a long way. Oak Flat is worth it.

I'm from Tucson. That is Tohono O'odham land and Representative Grijalva district who brings the Save Oak Flat Act to the table. Thank you, Representative Grijalva!

I pastor a church whose membership reaches all the way south to the border and north into Tom O'Halleran's District. We stand in opposition to the proposed mine that would hollow out the heart of Oak Flat.

I also bring with me a national coalition to dismantle the doctrine of discovery, and an international organization, CPT, Community Peacemaker Teams, that are both tracking what the United States government is doing here.

And, on Wendlser's advise, when I come to Oak Flat, I come as myself, ready to open my human heart. That is also your job here. Listen to the people and listen to this place. It may change your life.

Water: Resolution Copper claims they own enough water to run the mine. In the life of the mine it would take nearly 4 billion (3,845,046,520) gallons mostly from the Colorado River. You know the west well enough to know that is "paper water." It doesn't exist.

Climate emergency: From pumping water, to moving machinery, to cooling the depths, mining uses energy. Moving water around is the biggest electricity use in this state. It would take more than 2 billion kilowatt hours, produced mostly by burning carbon, to bring Central Arizona Project water up to the mine site. That's just the energy to get the water there, not to run the mine! And If Oak Flat were to be destroyed, a native year-round source of flowing water and deep womb of aquifer would be gone. The plants, the ancient oaks they are so much more than a carbon sink, but they are that too. A mine here would raise the temperature in this already burning hot region.

Holiness: They say "Oak Flat is sacred to the Apache." And that is true. And. Sacred is sacred. It is not true for them and a lie for me. Sacred is not a quaint idea of a bygone people, to be trod upon. Holy is holy.

You Apache, O'odham and your ancestors were drawn to this already holy place. For centuries your prayer has deepened the power of this sacred land.

There is scripture here writ on stone wall, a pictograph of Genesis, the story of creation. Human beings do not lead the procession. Nor are we at the end of the line. We are in the midst of our relatives. We are part of creation; to partner with it and struggle for it. This indigenous perspective is needed to dismantle the structures and mindset and theology that has fueled genocide and is hurling us headlong into ecological destruction.

There are precious metals gliding the altars of many a cathedral. You don't mine them. And you don't presume to trade them away. Protecting Oak Flat is an matter of religious freedom and of respect.

I am a follower of Jesus. My scriptures describe Jesus talking with an indigenous woman, a Canaanite woman. It didn't start off well. He called her a dog.

Of course, that spoken disrespect is nothing compared to the genocide and theft of land by my ancestors, nothing compared to the history of the United States government making and breaking treaties, including the Santa Fe treaty, nothing compared to threatening this sacred land today.

The Canaanite woman in the story and the Apache today have a lot in common. They don't shut up. When disrespected, they come back with a challenge and demand.

Jesus listened to that indigenous challenge. Will you? And will you help your bosses? Will you help move them? Will you be filled with courage by the words of siblings here and the stored strength of centuries of prayer and by the Angels on assignment in this place?

Jesus listened and then acknowledged the truth, "Great is your faith!" Her indigenous faith! And then Jesus did what she asked.

How will you treat Apache faith and demands? Listen. Acknowledge the truth. And do what the Apache are asking.

You are also depicted here on that wall of creation; you are a child of the Creator. It is because of that that you have power, power to advocate for justice, for the land.

Go beyond checking a box "we have consulted." Turn the tables on the corrupt and evil deal that would turn this sacred land into a cavernous hole.

And if the US government is done with this land and wants to transfer it, don't turn it over to a foreign mining interest. Give it back to the Apache.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. World without end. Amen.