



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2008:009

PROTECTION OF THE SACRED CEREMONIAL STONES/PRAYER HILL FROM IMPACTS AND DESTRUCTION

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-five (25) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) advised and funded "improvements" to the Turner Falls, Massachusetts Municipal Airport that will impact and destruct the sacred ceremonial Stones/Prayer Hill; and
- WHEREAS,** in the northwestern portion of what is now known as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, at the great horseshoe bend and falls on the Connecticut River in 1675, Canonchet, the Chief Sachem of the Narragansett Indians set up a refugee village for the families of the war weary combatant Tribes during the 2nd Puritan War against Indians, known as the King Philip's war; among them were the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pocumtuc, Abnaki, Massachusetts, Pennacook, Mahican, Sokoki, Narragansett and others; and
- WHEREAS,** Captain William Turner led a colonial militia assault and massacre of more than 300 women, children, elders and their defenders who were residents of that village above the falls. One of the three towns that, today, borders the falls is named "Turner Falls"; and
- WHEREAS,** for thousands of years, this great horseshoe bend and falls on the Connecticut River was a place of peace and high ceremony where the Pocumtuc People annually welcomed their regional neighbors and distant travelers to share in the abundant harvest of the shad and other ocean fish that came up river to lay their eggs; and
- WHEREAS,** Turner Falls is now home to a small regional airport that services recreational and commuting pilots, and the FAA has earmarked \$10 million dollars to extend and improve the airport runway; and
- WHEREAS,** in 2004, at the request of the Turner Falls town leadership, the Medicine Man of the Narragansett performed a "burying of the hatchet" ceremony and signed an accord to promote harmony, prosperity and historic preservation in the region; and
- WHEREAS,** a Tribal historic preservation crisis has developed, where archaeology on the westerly hill next to the runway revealed camp sites that are over 12,000 years, 8,000 years and 2,000 years old, of which the Commonwealth of Massachusetts seeks to protect; and
- WHEREAS,** the easterly side of the runway has a higher hill that is an Ancient Sacred Ceremonial Stone Landscape / Praying Hill with, among its many ceremonial features, has a sunset marker that annually, on August 13, heralds the coming of the height of the Perseid Meteor shower; and
- WHEREAS,** this hill is the center of a little known ancient Tribal ceremonial stone structure "district" that extends 15 miles in all directions; and
- WHEREAS,** in the middle of a battle with FAA regarding non-compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR Part 800) Tribal Consultation, in the absence of compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act, and

"Because there is strength in Unity"

against Tribal recommendations, FAA permitting guidelines required the Turner Falls Airport Commission to clear cut all of the trees on the Sacred Landscape that is the westerly hill along the runway; and

WHEREAS,

the impacts to the surfaces of the hill have unearthed additional ceremonial elements of this sacred place, which need to be examined as a part of the requested report to the National Register; and

WHEREAS,

a meticulous re-evaluation of the adversely impacted site is needed to assess the full influence, interpret the current status and document the significant elements for a final determination to present to the Keeper; therefore, be it

RESOLVED,

the USET Board of Directors is calling on the Federal Aviation Administration to cease and desist "improvements" to the Turner Falls, Massachusetts Municipal Airport; and be it further

RESOLVED,

the National Register of Historic Places has requested tribal clarification of the significance of this tribal historic property, the Narragansett Indian Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) are requesting that FAA fund Tribal specialists to assess the impacts to the ceremonial elements of this hill by the equipment and procedures used in the "clear cutting" of the trees by the airport commission; and, be it further

RESOLVED

the USET Board of Directors is calling on the Federal Aviation Administration to facilitate and fund the joint Tribal Historic Preservation Offices' assessment, remediation and mitigation in their efforts to protect and preserve the integrity of this sacred Prayer Hill and the area of potential effect.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Marksville, LA, on Thursday, October 18, 2007.



Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Cheryl Downing, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.