Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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TULSA, Okla. — The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs has added an extra session to the Interior Department's series of listening meetings on sacred sites in Indian Country. A sixth session will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2012, in Tulsa, Okla. The first five were held last month in Albuquerque, N.M., Billings, Mont., Prior Lake, Minn., Uncasville, Conn., and Portland, Ore.

The Obama Administration recognizes that the protection of sacred sites on federal lands is integral to traditional religious practices, tribal identities and emblematic of sovereign tribal nations. These sacred site listening sessions are intended to assist in developing policies that result in effective, comprehensive and long-lasting federal protection of and tribal access to the places that are so important to the fabric and culture of tribal nations.

To address tribal concerns regarding sacred sites issues, Interior is conducting listening sessions on sacred sites in general, as well as knowledge relating to specific sites on Interior-managed tribal trust and other federal lands. The Department will be better equipped to make decisions that are sensitive to the ceremonial use and physical integrity of sacred sites through the benefit of tribal input and views on such matters.

Because many Indian tribes have belief systems that discourage or even prohibit the disclosure of the location or other information about sacred sites and places, Interior will respect tribal requests that information about such locations be kept confidential and only share this information with appropriate agency personnel.

For those unable to attend any of these listening sessions, please send your input/suggestions by September 21, 2012, via email to consultation@bia.gov or to the U.S. Department of the Interior, attn.: Mr. Dion Killsback, Counselor to the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, at 1849 C Street, N.W., MS 4141-MIB, Washington, D.C., 20240. Should you have additional questions, Mr. Killsback can be reached at (202) 208-6939.

WHO:	Bryan Newland, Senior Policy Advisor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, DOI Jonodev Chaudhuri, Senior Counselor to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, DOI Tribal leaders from the Eastern Oklahoma Region, Southern Plains Region, and other regions
WHAT:	Sixth DOI listening session on sacred sites in Indian Country.
WHEN:	Tuesday, September 18, 2012 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (local time)
WHERE:	Federal Bldg., 333 South Boulder Ave., 3rd Floor Courtroom, Tulsa, Okla., 74103.

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