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A White Mountain Apache tribal delegation from Arizona will arrive in Washington Saturday, December 11, poised for a full week of activities prior to the official Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony slated for next Friday.

The five-member delegation, representing the Tribe which donated the Nation's Christmas tree this year, will be composed of: Lester Oliver, Tribal Chairman; Fred Banashley, Vice-Chairman; Mary Enfield; Mary V. Riley; and Nelson Lupe, Sr.

Activities will include a visit to Children's Hospital, the German School in McLean, Virginia and the Catoctin Job Corps Camp at Catoctin, Maryland. They will also attend the United National Concert at Constitution Hall on Sunday, December 12, where they are slated to present a gift from the Tribe to Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs will honor the delegation at a reception in the BIA Auditorium, 1951 Constitution Avenue NW., on Thursday, December 16, at 2 p.m.

The tree, Which arrived by flat car in Washington December 2, stood 101 feet tall on its mountain perch. Even when pruned down so that it could be eased out of its hideaway, it reaches 85 feet skyward on the White House lawn. An Apache crane operator guided the steel claws that eased the tree from its native place, and Apache timber men helped trim and tie its giant branches and wrap the tree in plastic sheeting for its journey.

When the switch is flipped on December 17, lighting the 1,000 colored bulbs to signal the beginning of the 1965 Pageant for Peace, Tribal Council Chairman 1liver will be on the platform.

Back on the reservation, some 4,000 members of the Tribe have seen to it that their Christmas tree gift will be remembered for many a year. Where once it stood in lonely splendor on a remote mountainside, its site will be marked with a plaque. The trail that leads there from the Apache capital of Whiteriver will be smoothed into a road that tourists can travel.

Just before the bend in the trail where the tree stood there will be a new lake. Fed by the water of two Creeks, Sun and Moon, which once nourished the tree, the lake will be 41 acres in surface area. It has been created for protection and propagation of a species of trout, the Salmo Gila, that is found only on the White Mountain Reservation. Some of these fish have already been captured in the high mountain streams and transplanted into the creeks. The floodgates were held shut until the Christmas tree had been removed November 15, and now the waters are beginning to flow into the new recreation area. Although originally to be called Sun-Moon Lake, the Tribe is now thinking about changing the name to Christmas Tree Lake.

There is another manmade recreational water area, Hawley Lake, on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, built about ten years ago. It has provided considerable income to the Tribe, whose means of livelihood are limited by the mountainous terrain and isolation of their reservation.

Although the White Mountain Apaches (one of four Apache groups in the southwest) live in relative isolation, they are trying to make the most of their resources. Some families still live in the traditional straw huts called wickiups, but others are living in new low-cost public housing which they have bought with "sweat equity," substituting their labor for cash down payments under a special arrangement with the Public Housing Administration.

The tribal population has doubled since the turn of the century. Some of the children attend school in a former army headquarters building and play on the troop parade ground. But more children are attending a new, modern, well-staffed public elementary and secondary school at Whiteriver. Tribal elders feel that the new school broadens horizons for their children--and they will need educated Apaches if they try to expand their forestry and ranching industries and tourist facilities.

For these reasons, the visiting Apache delegation will confer with Indian Commissioner Philleo Nash on further plans for economic development of the White Mountain Reservation during the coming week. The Bureau of Indian Affairs provides loans and technical aid for economic improvement of Indian properties.