



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2007:037

SACRED CEREMONIAL STONE LANDSCAPES FOUND IN THE ANCESTRAL TERRITORIES OF UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC. MEMBER TRIBES

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) 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,** within the ancestral territories of the USET Tribes there exists sacred ceremonial stone landscapes and their stone structures which are of particular cultural value to certain USET member Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** for thousands of years before the immigration of Europeans, the medicine people of the USET Tribal ancestors used these sacred landscapes to sustain the people's reliance on Mother Earth and the spirit energies of balance and harmony; and
- WHEREAS,** during and following the Colonial oppression of Southern and Eastern Tribes, many cultural and ceremonial practices, including ceremonial use of stones and stone landscapes, were suppressed; and
- WHEREAS,** the properties which compromise these sacred landscapes are threatened by the encroachments of imminent development; and
- WHEREAS,** whether these stone structures are massive or small structures, stacked, stone rows or effigies, these prayers in stone and often mistaken by archaeologists and State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) as the efforts of farmers clearing stones for agricultural or wall building purposes; and
- WHEREAS,** archaeologists and SHPOs, categorically thereafter, dismiss these structures as non-Indian and insignificant, permitting them to be the subjects of the sacrilege of archaeological dissection and later destruction during development projects; and
- WHEREAS,** Federal laws exist, including, but not limited to, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) as amended with 36 CFR Part 800, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Executive Order 13007, and all other related laws, rules, regulations and executive orders that support the rights of Tribal Nations, but have yet to proactively influence protection of sacred ceremonial stone landscape sites; and

"Because there is strength in Unity"

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- WHEREAS,** many sacred ceremonial stone landscapes are on lands controlled by or are within projects which are advised, funded or permitted by government departments and agencies such as the Department of the Interior, Department of the Army, Department of Agriculture, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Communications Commission, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Register of Historic Places; and
- WHEREAS,** claiming them as products of farm clearing, professional archaeologists and the SHPOs annually pass judgment on the significance and potential protection of these sacred ceremonial stone landscapes and their structures within USET ancestral territories; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors requests that all relevant government departments and agencies actively and formally facilitate consultation with the federally recognized Indian Tribes of the region regarding the sacred ceremonial stone landscapes; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors recommends that the Federal departments and agencies facilitate regional workshops between Tribes, State Historic Preservation Offices, archaeologists and Federal Departments and Agencies to facilitate a better comprehension of these concerns and a correction in these dismissive and destructive local policies; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors requests a draft Federal Government enforcement policy for the protection of the National Historic Preservation Act under Executive Order 13007; and, be it further
- RESOLVED** the Federal Government will provide the member Tribes of United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. with assistance, when requested, for the protection of historical sites and sacred landscapes within their ancestral territories.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA, on Thursday, February 15, 2007.



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



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