

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/15/2025 11:56:24 PM

First name: Daniel

Last name: Callaghan

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a former captain in the U.S. Marine Corps and an A-Team Commander in the Special Forces. During my military service I served with a number of Native Americans, including Lakota. One was a Lakota pilot who sent back to Pine Ridge a flag he flew during a mission over North Vietnam. When I took on ending insults and exploitation of Native American culture and spirituality in my Florida town, I first engaged in peaceful efforts to rewrite a script for a musical in which more than a hundred White children, most dressed in Native American regalia, acted out the human sacrifice to a fictitious god of children dressed as Spaniards, and the one of three adults dressed as a priest called Indians "savages, pagans, and heathens." When authorities refused to alter the script written in 1923, I worked with the Florida American Indian Movement and filed a lawsuit that ended the musical after 82 years. When more than 200 business and civic leaders refused to end the Krewe of Chasco float in which Whites in nine regional parades, not one having Indian heritage, dressed in authentic regalia purchased under false pretenses, playing rock 'n roll music while shaking their buckskin assets and drinking free beer, I chained myself to the parade route stopping the float and the local parade with 100,000 spectators. I was convicted of four misdemeanors and felony battery on a law enforcement officer despite witnesses and film of the entire episode. My supporters included writer Peter Matthiessen, and Lakota leader Russell Means. An old car full of young Lakota journeyed all the way from South Dakota to support our efforts to end racism toward Native Americans. That Krewe gave up their Indian profanity and now dress as pioneers.

My wife and I have long supported St. Joseph's school which she visited not so long ago. She saw the magnificent sculpture of Crazy Horse and when a tourist questioned why he looks so angry, Anni told her "Because he's pointing to the lands emptied of his people."

And now, echoing the brutish "explorations" of Colonel George Custer, and the ignoring of the spiritual and culture significance of the Black Hills, and the blackmailing to demand the Lakota surrender Sapa in return for cash, the National Forest Service is about to inflict a grievous injury upon these First Americans by allowing the ground to be broken, the natural beauty to be ruined, and the water contaminated not to benefit the Lakota, but to benefit the never-ending desire for gold among non-Indians. This is a repugnant, sinful, arrogant act that cannot be defended, or allowed to go forward.

Here in Pasco County, Florida, a small group of citizens kept the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from issuing a permit to slice and dice 5000 acres given to us "in perpetuity" for wetlands destroyed building the highway to nowhere. We did so for 19 years to keep the Serenova Preserve a haven for wildlife, for rare plants, and for generations of people who found solace and better health in this wilderness corridor for bears and mountain lions. Then Trump invited county commissioners to his White House, a new person was put in charge of issuing permits, and the highway was built, saving its travelers five minutes of time between newly built developments. We remain in federal court as a judge reads through 100,000 documents on why this permit should be rescinded. This is what injustice looks like, what greed looks like, what selfish power looks like. There is time to stop this travesty, this harm to the Lakota peoples. Just do it.