

SACRED SITE THREATENED



Manataka American Indian Council

P.O. Box 476, Hot Springs, AR 71902-0476
501-627-0555 * manataka@sbcglobal.net * www.manataka.org

Officers and Elders

Charles Doc Chanter Davidson
David Quiet Wind Furr
Lee Standing Bear Moore
Hurvie Waka Hucha Chisum
Jim Path Finder Ewing
Bonnie R. Cloud
Becky Owl Woman Moore, Women's Council
Robert Woableza LaBatte, Spiritual Elder
Chief Jim Gray Wolf Henson, Honorary Elder

Committee and Senior Leaders

Charles Lonewolf Black, Warrior Society
David Avery, Lodge Keeper
Jennifer White Feather Attaway, Dance Keeper
Col. John Mountain Wind Outler, Counseling
Leisha Six Fires Rhodes, Grave Preservation

Honored Spiritual Brothers & Sisters:

Manataka desperately needs your help.

We respectfully ask that you immediately begin prayer ceremonies for the sacred site, Manataka (Place of Peace). We also ask that you write a brief letter from your heart stating that Manataka is a sacred American Indian site. You should clearly identify yourself, your tribal affiliation or organization and your qualifications as a spiritual elder and/or tribal leader and give us permission to distribute your letter.

(Important: See [Sample Letter](#) and [Instructions](#))

We expect to receive many such letters from across North, Central and South America. These letters will be hand-delivered to senators and congressmen in Washington, D.C., to government offices and local officials with the intent of requesting formal federal designation as an American Indian sacred site.

Background

As you may know our people have gathered for prayer ceremonies at the base of sacred Manataka Mountain for hundreds, if not thousands of years. After the invasion of Manataka in 1541 by Spanish Conquistadors, who came looking for the famous "Fountain of Youth", indigenous people continued to make long pilgrimages to this sacred site for approximately another 200 years despite the fact that the 'Keepers of Manataka', the Tula of Tanico had been nearly decimated by war with Desoto's army and disease brought by the Spanish and travel to Manataka during those years also became increasing more dangerous as the populations of many tribes rapidly declined due to genocidal policies of the federal government.

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson commission Lewis & Clark to find the Pacific Ocean and at the same time commissioned Dunbar & Hunter to find the mythical and precious hot springs of Manataka. In 1818, greedy government agents duped the Quapaw Nation into ceding land around the hot springs and Manataka they never claimed as belonging to them. In 1820, The Territorial Assembly of Arkansas approved a petition to the U. S. Congress asking for "Sections be granted to the local Legislature", to include all the Hot Springs. In 1832, President Andrew Jackson pushed a 'provisional law' through Congress designating the hot springs and most of Manataka as the very first reservation created by the U.S. government.

From Desoto to Jackson, powerful white Europeans and their descendents clamored to know the secrets of Manataka. Why?

Before the time of the genocide by relocation Removals in the 1830's, when indigenous people were forcibly removed to Indian Territory, very few American Indians were able to come to Manataka for prayer ceremonies. Regardless of extreme hardships and severe persecution, a succession of small indigenous groups continued ceremonies in secret under the cover of darkness high on the mountain for the next 100 or more years. The notable Choctaw Chief, Louis LeFlor, came to Hot Springs and conducted ceremonies at the sacred Manataka site until his death here in the early 1830s.

In the early 1900's a group of full blood and mixed American Indians and local white businessmen formed the Manatakau Indian Association in Hot Springs that covertly and sometimes overtly fostered the continuation of sacred ceremonies at the Hot Springs (Manataka) Mountain. Government and church personnel who created internal dissention and the group's eventual demise later infiltrated this group.

About the time the Manatakau Indian Association ceased to exist, a lone 'Keeper of Manataka' emerged who single handedly created a bridge between the previously hostile and bigoted local community and American Indian spiritual leaders who came for prayer ceremonies. Benito Altaha Grayhorse, a Chiricahau Apache, sometimes referred to as 'Chief Gray Horse, moved to Hot Springs in 1927 and lived with his wife and family at the foot of the mountain in Gulpha Gorge for the next 19 years. Benito Gray Horse was well-educated lawyer and doctor who lived in a hogan, made crafts to sell to the tourists and

led visitors on tours of the mountain both on foot and horseback. He built a sweat lodge and dance circle and invited American Indian spiritual elders from many nations to return to the mountain. He learned many stories of the mountain from the elders and passed many of those stories on to his family and others. As a good communicator, Gray Horse won the respect and admiration of the local population and was chosen Grand Marshal of the Hot Springs Parade for two years before his death in 1946.

A number of American Indian 'Keepers of Manataka' followed Grey Horse in quick succession until 1979, when Lee Standing Bear Moore moved to Hot Springs and formed a friendship with Louise Henrietta Napanee Grayhorse that lasted until her death in 1992. In 1997, Bear helped to form the Manataka American Indian Council (MAIC) who immediately began hosting Summer and Fall Gatherings at Manataka that have continued until this year.

In October 2004 MAIC was denied a permit to gather in the Gulpha Gorge Campground by Jose Fernandez, formerly of New York, and new Superintendent Hot Springs National Park Service, who cited several unfounded, false and petty allegations as reason for the denial. (See the NPS letter and MAIC Response attached.)

Government Intention and Actions

The intent of the NPS is clear. They want all American Indian religious activities at the sacred Manataka to stop – forever.

Because we were refused a permit to Gather on November 6, MAIC held an unofficial "Ungathering" where individual families rented dozens of camp spaces and ceremonies were performed between the campsites because we were forcibly prevented from going to the fire circle. NPS officials threatened members and their families with federal arrest if anyone went to the sacred fire circle for prayer ceremonies. They encircled the families (mostly women and children) with patrol cars with glaring flashing lights. They video taped participants and sent plain-clothed officers into our midst to record our conversations. They stopped vehicles without just cause and generally harassed our members and guests in an attempt to disrupt our ceremonies. While all this was going on, NPS Rangers allowed a white Christian group, who were not campers and did not have a permit to enter the fire circle and conduct a meeting. We call this selective enforcement.

For many years, the NPS has continually harassed our members and violated our constitutional rights with over-zealous and selective enforcement of park rules. Illegal stop and searches have been commonplace. Segregating individual members off from the group for intensive interrogation happens frequently. Vehicles are searched with no probable cause. One friend of MAIC was charged with 'destruction of park property' when her four-year old daughter carried a dried leave off of the mountain. A Park Ranger has called us "pagans" and other names.

We refused to become angry for the sake of peace and did not empower them with our objections. This may have been a mistake.

Reasons why they do want our people there, in a public place, are not so obvious to the casual observer and NPS bureaucrats refuse to put those reasons in writing. The first reason is bigotry. During a meeting in October, the new superintendent compared American Indian religious beliefs with “*pagan and witches*”. In public, the superintendent now denies making this statement, but she has made other questionable statements to members of the community about American Indian culture. The second reason is they are fearful American Indians will attempt to reclaim these grounds. There may be solid legal basis for doing so, but that is absolutely not our intention. No tribe ever claimed rights over these sacred grounds (with the possible exception of late-coming Western Cherokee). We do not own it nor do we wish to control it. All we want to do is pray and perform our ceremonies. The third and fourth reasons must be withheld at this time to allow the bureaucrats to reveal themselves to the public.

Another basis of the denial is found at the bottom of the letter where NPS employees claim that Manataka (now called the Hot Springs Mountain) is not a sacred site – at least in their eyes. In the absence of such ‘official bureaucratic designation’ they are placing unfair and burdensome rules on our religious observances. For example:

NPS employees have dissected activities during the Gathering into two categories: Non-First Amendment Rights Activities and First Amendment Religious Activities.

They say the Manataka Medicine Lodge teepee is a “display” and a separate permit must be obtained but will most likely be denied because it falls into the first category.

The Manataka Medicine Lodge contains sacred objects brought to Manataka by spiritual elders over the course of many years. It contains an altar and fire circle. All activities conducted in the lodge during gatherings are ceremonial and religious in nature. Who are they to judge whether the Lodge is religious or not?

They say our “seminars” following ceremonies are not religious and a special permit and \$100,000 liability bond is required.

Special presentations are part of our religious tradition to teach the people. For example, during the Manataka Gathering in June, two programs were presented, “Healing Medicine Herbs” and “Sacred Drumming” – both very much religious in nature.

NPS bureaucrats also consider the Bear Dance Ceremony, singing and drumming as “music and entertainment” and will force us to remove these elements from the Gathering.

Anyone who knows American Indian culture understands that these activities are very much a part of our religious observances.

If Hot Springs National Park employees are allowed to dissect our ceremonies and activities of the Gathering according to their personal whims, without any authoritative

basis, without regard to our spiritual beliefs, without respect - then they will do the same thing at other sacred sites and the religious freedoms of all American Indians are in jeopardy. We cannot and should not allow their ignorance and petty power mongering to interfere with these fundamental human rights.

It is our opinion that continual 'suggestions' by NPS superintendents over the years to move our religious activities elsewhere has permeated down through NPS ranks and has become accepted unofficial 'policy' and as a result, some employees have been overzealous in their efforts to enforce campground rules.

It is our sincere wish that further action is not necessary. We believe in the wisdom of the Creator, your prayers and the simple words of truth contained in your letter will be sufficient to regain access to the sacred Manataka for ceremonies.

We hope a nationwide petition campaign and legal battle in federal courts is not necessary. We do not seek media attention or angry demonstrations. We do not want anyone to become angry with NPS bureaucrats or take any other action outside of writing a letter at this time. *We do encourage you* to contact other respected spiritual elders and tribal leaders and ask that they write a similar letter.

We are available to answer your questions or listen to your advice – day and night. Thank you for giving our request your heartfelt consideration.

Respectfully,

For the Elder Council,

Charles Doc 'Chanter' Davidson
David Quiet Wind Furr
Lee Standing Bear Moore
Hervie Long Legs Chisum
Rebecca Owl Woman Moore, Women's Council
Jim Path Finder Ewing
Bonnie R. Cloud

Ready to start writing? (Important: See [Sample Letter](#) and [Instructions](#))

TWO PAGE LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Hot Springs National Park
P.O. Box 1860
Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas 71902

IN REPLY REFER TO:

October 18, 2004

A90

Lee Standing Bear Moore
Manataka American Indian Council
P. O. Box 476
Hot Springs, Arkansas 71902-0476

Dear Lee:

I have considered your application request for a special use permit to use the Gulpha Gorge Amphitheater and Fire Ring from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Nov. 7, 2004 on behalf of the Manataka Native American Indian Council.

Upon review of your application, I have concluded that the request is for two types of activities which required review under different guidelines: American Indian Religious Ceremonies (First Amendment activity); and Music, Displays, Seminars, etc. (non-First Amendment activities).

I'm denying your request for the non-First Amendment Rights activities based on the following documented violations during the most recent MAIC Gathering at Gulpha Gorge in June 2004.

- 1) Quiet time violations (36 CFR 2.11, Park Compendium, permit conditions, and posted signs)
- 2) Resource disturbance/damage (36 CFR 2.1)
- 3) Presence of unauthorized L.E. vehicles (Exclusive Jurisdiction of the park)
- 4) Vehicles parked on grass (36 CFR 2.1 and permit conditions)
- 5) Unauthorized livestock (horses) in area. (36 CFR 2.16)
- 6) Interpretation conflict/displacement (Representative discussions park personnel)
- 7) Interference by MAIC members with Rangers performing lawful duties (36 CFR 2.32)

I have discussed these specific violations in person on three separate occasions with representatives of your organization. I'm also aware that similar documented violations have occurred in previous years and that assurances in the past have not prevented them from reoccurring. The decision for denial is based on National Park Service Director's Order #53, the recommendations of the Law Enforcement Ranger Division, the documentation of repeated violations over the years, and consultation with the Department of Interior Solicitor.

As for your request for a Native American Indian Religious Ceremony, the courts have recognized that activities associated with the exercise of First Amendment Rights may be reasonably regulated to protect legitimate government interests. Therefore, we will regulate the time, place and manner where these activities are conducted in order to protect park resources.

In the past you have asserted a special religious relation between the land managed by Hot Springs National Park and your organization and/or members.

We acknowledge that members of Federally recognized Native American tribes may have certain rights regarding access to and use of cultural and natural resources of the National Park System. Park enabling legislations, treaties, and pertinent court decisions usually provide the base of information for park managers regarding such rights.

Executive Order 13007 on Indian Sacred Sites directs Federal Agencies to accommodate access to and use of sacred sites. "Sacred sites" means any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion; provided that the tribe or appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion has informed the agency of the existence of such a site.

We have no record of such a designation made by a recognized Native American Tribe or by an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion of the existence of such a site within the land managed by the National Park Service at Hot Springs National Park. In the absence of such a designation, I must review and decide on your application for a First Amendment activity as I would all groups and/or individuals seeking permission for similar situated activities.

Should you desire to resubmit an application for a First Amendment activity, we will consider it as we do all such applications.

Sincerely,



Josie Fernandez
Superintendent

Ready to start writing? (Important: See [Sample Letter](#) and [Instructions](#))

Response to the October 18, 2004 letter received by the Manataka American Indian Council from Jose Fernandez, Superintendent of the Hot Springs National Park Service:

In the letter, Superintendent Fernandez cites seven (7) charges and reasons for denying MAIC a Special Use permit for the November 6, 2004 Fall Gathering.

1) *Quiet time violations (36 CFR 2.11, Park Compendium, permit conditions and posted signs.)* [NPS specifically pointed out during the meeting that a generator was

running past 10 p.m.]

MAIC specifically and emphatically denies there were ever any violations of the Quiet Time rules at the Gulpha Gorge Campgrounds during any event sponsored by the Manataka American Indian Council.

Park Rangers received no complaints from any camper during past years and organizers of the event were never informed of any such violation during any event. Park Rangers never issued written citations for any alleged violation to the organizers and MAIC never received any formal written or verbal notification of any alleged violations prior to a meeting on October 4, 2004.

During this meeting NPS officials raised this issue for the first time. No assurances about future violations were given during this meeting because MAIC was not aware of any alleged violation, with the exception of the Bill Barbour incident explained below:

A generator was operated by a private individual, Chief Bill Little Horse, 97 of Benton. MAIC did not authorize its use, however, MAIC was aware of its operation. Prior to turning on the generator all campers within the area that might be affected by the sound were informed of the situation and all agreed to allow Chief Little Horse this privilege due to his age and poor health. Because of a severe respiratory problem, Little Horse absolutely required special electrically operated air conditioning. However, a Park Ranger demanded the generator to be shut off. After this incident, Chief Little Horse became ill and was admitted to the hospital suffering from pneumonia where he later died. Did NPS Ranger's over-zealous enforcement contribute to Mr. Barbour's death? We believe so.

During music played during the Bear Dance Ceremony at the June 2004 Gathering ended at 9:25 p.m. Participants then lined up for a silent walk up the mountain for prayer ceremonies.

2) Resource disturbances and damage (26 CFR 2.1)

MAIC specifically denies there was any violation of the Resource disturbance and damage laws at the Gulpha Gorge Campgrounds during any event sponsored by the Manataka American Indian Council.

During the meeting in October, NPS officials displayed pictures of what appeared to be two small stone circles and alleged members of MAIC disturbed NPS property by removing stones from various locations and placing them into the circles. During this discussion, the NPS superintendent cited a report from a Park Ranger allegedly written on or about the time of the June event in which he observed 40 people at the location of the stones on top of the mountain but failed to speak to any of those persons about being off the trail and the movement of stones because he was fearful for his safety.

MAIC has good reason to believe a person or persons who are not members of MAIC

moved the stones sometime prior to the June event.

None of the participants from any of the four groups of 17 to 19 people each saw a Park Ranger on the mountain that night. In order for the Ranger to see a number of people at the exact location of the stones, the people would have seen the Ranger as well. None of the four groups went anywhere near the area in question.

After the October meeting, MAIC closely inspected the area and the stones themselves three times. It was apparent that metal tools had been used to clear away brush.

MAIC closely observes every person, including members and campers who walk across the creek to the trail leading up the mountain during times of sponsored events from the permitted area. At no time during any event has any member or camper been observed carrying shovels, rakes, saws or axes.

Other pictures showing feathers hanging from trees and alleged to have been placed there by MAIC members during events is correct. Some members have hung feathers in trees around the area of prayer ceremonies. However, as NPS officials pointed out during the meeting the feathers were removed after the ceremonies and the feathers were not NPS property.

This incident is a prime example of the extent to which Park Rangers will go to make it appear MAIC or its members broke park rules. The evidence is clear the NPS Ranger lied in his report.

There are over 75 witnesses!!!

3) *Presence of unauthorized L.E. vehicles (Exclusive Jurisdiction of the park)*

During the meeting, MAIC was shown once a picture of a single vehicle with a sign on it reading "Law Enforcement". The picture was obviously taken off NPS property at a location several blocks away.

At no time did MAIC neither authorize any other law enforcement authority to enter the grounds nor did MAIC officers witness the presence of the vehicle in question. No citations or knowledge about the presence of this vehicle were ever communicated to MAIC during the event or prior to the October meeting. No citations were ever issued.

Because the National Park campgrounds are public, MAIC has no control over the presence of any vehicles that may enter the area during a sponsored event. NPS lame attempt to blame MAIC with the alleged presence of a law enforcement vehicle is ridiculous at best.

4) *Vehicles parked on grass (36 CFR 2.1 and permit conditions)*

During past sponsored and permitted events, MAIC has used volunteers' greeters

who remind drivers to park off the grass. However, after Park Rangers asked that our volunteers *not* tell drivers where to park, MAIC was left with no means to assist with parking issues.

MAIC uses volunteers to shuttle our members to and from an area off NPS property to reduce parking congestion. We publish warnings about parking on the grass in our newsletters, website and on flyers and make periodic announcement during the event.

MAIC cannot be held responsible for drivers parking on the grass, especially non-members, tourists and local on-lookers because we are prevented from assisting drivers to do otherwise by NPS officials.

5) *Unauthorized livestock (horses) in area. (36 CFR 2.16)*

For many years past, MAIC hosted events where a horse was used as an integral part of religious wedding ceremonies. MAIC did request and receive permission for this activity in the past from Park Rangers. No citations or verbal warnings about this activity have ever been given to MAIC. After the new Park Superintendent informed us that this would no longer be permitted, all references about this activity were immediately removed from all published MAIC information and assurances were given, both verbally and in writing that MAIC would not encourage horses to be brought to the campgrounds.

6) *Interpretation conflict/displacement (Representative discussions park personnel)*

We have no idea as to what this means. We cannot respond to a charge with nebulous meaning. Does anyone outside NPS bureaucracy understand this charge?

7) *Interference by MAIC members with Rangers performing lawful duties (36 CFR 2.32)*

This charge is totally incorrect on the surface and nefarious in its substance. The one single instance referenced by Fernandez during the meeting involved the sacred Bear Dance ceremony when one its dancers laid down on the grass as he was instructed to do by his elder. A non-member (NPS employee?) misinterpreted this to mean the dancer was injured or sick and caused another person to call for emergency service.

When emergency personnel arrived, two of the men quietly moved around to the rear of the sacred fire circle and began discreetly talking with the dancer as ceremonies continued. An NPS officer arrived and literally jumped into the sacred circle and loudly proclaimed his presence. He was approached by two women elders and asked to move around to the rear of the circle (where the dancer was located) and to respect the ceremonies. At no time was he physically blocked or prevented from carrying on his duties.

Instead of being quiet and respecting the ceremonies, the NPS Ranger immediately began a loud tirade about 'doing his job' and crossed in front of the fire and physically pushed the women elders in the process.

Yelling at people in the sacred circle had nothing to do with doing his job, pushing elders had anything to do with his job neither did the fact that he placed himself between the fire (representing the Creator) and the elders and other members.

After the incident was over and it was determined the dancer did not want nor need medical assistance, the two emergency response people were thanked and praised for their actions by our members. The third was shunned in an obvious way. It is the third NPS officer who wrote his report in such a way as to make it appear he did nothing wrong and the two old women interfered with his duties. He lied. We have nearly a hundred witnesses to prove this is true.

Summary

While recognizing that activities associated with the exercise of First Amendment Rights may be "reasonably" regulated to protect "reasonable" government interests. However, Fernandez states, "...*We will regulate the time, place and manner where these activities are conducted...*"

MAIC has no objection to assertions that the NPS has limited authority over religious activities on government property, we however, emphatically demand equal treatment under the law and that selective enforcement cease immediately. We also demand that access to the Manataka sacred site is not unreasonably limited by loose interpretation of bureaucratic rules.

MAIC does absolutely object to assertions of NPS authority with regard to the manner in which our ceremonies are conducted. Fernandez has absolutely has no right, no authority and no expertise to dissect our ceremonies and make nebulous determinations about what she considers religious or non-religious activities.

Permit Denial

MAIC was denied a permit because we refused to complete two separate applications. By demanding that MAIC complete two permit applications, Fernandez uses no discernable standard to define which MAIC activities are religious in nature and which activities are not. MAIC will not complete two permit applications because we will not deny the holy and sacred nature of any part of our ceremonies to satisfy the personal whims and opinions of individuals and power mongering bureaucrats. If MAIC were to submit an application solely to satisfy the personal whims of NPS employees, we would be denying our own religious beliefs.

- The Manataka Medicine Lodge teepee is not a display – it is a religious place.
- Drumming, singing and dancing are not entertainment – they are religious expressions.

- MAIC sponsored seminars are not secular speeches – they are religious teachings.
- The consumption of food is not a picnic – it is a feast celebrating the blessings of the Creator.

Manataka Sacred Site

Fernandez further states that NPS *has “...no record of such [sacred site] designation made by a recognized Native American Tribe or by an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion of the existence of such a site within the land managed by the National Park service at Hot Springs National Park...”*

Yet, Fernandez also states in the same letter, *“...In the past you have asserted a special religious relation between the land managed by Hot Springs National Park and your organization and/or members. What? Is this bureaucrat double speak?*

From one side she says the government has “no record” and from the other side she says we have a “special religious relation”.

The federal government is in possession of records which clearly show that many American Indian nations prior to the invasions and subsequent subjugations designated the area now know as Hot Springs National Park as sacred grounds. The federal government is aware of the many old American Indian stories about this area. And, moreover local government bureaucrats are knowledgeable of dozens of highly recognized American Indian religious leaders and spiritual elders who regularly visit ‘Manataka’ to perform ceremonies and seek spiritual guidance.

Therefore, Fernandez’s statement and the government’s feigned ignorance of history and the present is an indication of its strong desire to manipulate government resources to suit the biased opinions of a few bureaucrats. The motivation for this obvious exploitation of American Indian religious freedoms and rights was quietly buried many years ago for fear that the indigenous nations would one day reclaim their most sacred place – The Place of Peace.

A ‘suggestion’ to move our religious ceremonies to another location off Manataka grounds by previous park superintendents and repeated by Fernandez during our meeting is not reasonable or practical. The only other places the event could take place is on the mountain itself or in the middle of downtown Hot Springs, neither of which are feasible. Our religious observances are spatial, not only temporal and depend on access to specific sacred grounds during specific times of the year. This fact is indicative of most all indigenous Tribes and Nations.

Appeal

It is our opinion that continual ‘suggestions’ by NPS superintendents over the years to move our religious activities elsewhere has permeated down through NPS ranks and has become accepted unofficial ‘policy’ and as a result, some employees have been overzealous in their efforts to enforce campground rules.

Truth of the government's motivation behind the denial of a permit to allow American Indians to gather again will become obvious to the world in time. The louder they become in their denial, the louder the wind will bring truth.

The funny thing about the fears of local bureaucrats is that not a single American Indian tribe ever 'claimed' these sacred grounds (with the possible exception of the Western Cherokee). A person or people may occupy the land or worship on the land, but we never have dominion over the land or its inhabitants. Therefore, there will never be an effort to 'reclaim' these sacred grounds of Manataka for the sake of control. Ownership belongs only to the Creator.

Federal laws and executive orders are specific about governmental entities' treatment of sites that are considered sacred by tribes and interested Native Americans, whether recognized or not; in fact, it is specifically directed that governmental agencies work with local groups to preserve sites, remove impediments to practicing ceremonies and not restrict access by Native Americans.

All we wish to do is go to the Sacred Manataka, perform our ceremonies of thanksgiving to the Creator and pray.

Will you help us? Will you allow us to do this please?

SEE RELATED ARTICLES:

[American Indian Sacred Sites and the Dept. of Defense](#)

[American Indian Sacred Sites and the Dept. of Interior](#)

SAMPLE LETTER

From the desk of:

John J. Jacobs

P.O. Box 476
Anywhere, USA

MAIC
PO Box 476
Hot Springs, AR 71902

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am John J. Jacobs, an enrolled member of the Beothunk Nation and Spiritual Elder of my tribe. I am also a member of the Native American Indian Church and the National Chaplin's Association. I was given training by the Cheltal elders of our people.

It is with honor and respect that we say Manataka (Hot Springs) is a sacred American Indian site from the many stories of our people. Other religious men and women of other nations who honor Manataka and we will encourage them to write a letter for this purpose so that all people everywhere may recognize Manataka as a sacred site and it may be preserved and protected.

This letter may be copied and distributed as needed.

Respectfully,

John J. Jacobs

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Be familiar with the issue. Read the full text above**
2. **Go to the 'Example Letter' above**
The format of your letter should follow the general outline shown.
3. **Please include the following elements in your letter:**

- **Full Name and Address**
- **Religious or Tribal Credentials**
- **Short Statement**
- **Permission to Distribute**
- **Signature**

4. **Please send as soon as possible to:**
Manataka American Indian Council
Post Office Box 476
Hot Springs, AR 71902-0476

Questions: 501-627-0555 [EMAIL](#)

We are most grateful for your prayers, time and energy in helping Manataka!

We are not asking for donations. Can you get more than one letter? Please.

Have a wonderful day!

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