

**Sapa Dawn Center
Yelm, Washington
August 1992**

COMMUNIQUE NO. 14

A WARNING TO OUR PEOPLE

In August 1990 at the Traditional Circle of Elders and Youth gathering at Onondaga, the women of the Circle came together to share their great concern for their children. Our urgent message was: We Want Our Children Back!

We are the Mothers and the Grandmothers who have weathered the storms. We have accepted them as part of our lives. We will not stand in judgment. We are here to give you our hands, our hearts, and our minds. You are our rainbows, the reward of our lives. You are our hope for the future. **YOU ARE OUR FUTURE!**

The political leaders of our communities are making decisions that have a detrimental impact upon our communities and families. Respect for children is secondary to commercial interest, economic development planning, and personal gain. Commercial businessmen are willing to trade off our rights as nations at the expense of our children, families, wildlife, and environment to promote their own financial benefit.

Our children are being lost in epidemic proportions to teenage pregnancy, suicide, alcohol, drugs, sniffing gas, glue, paint, etc., incest, sexual abuse, battering, abandonment, emotional abuse, FAE/FAS, hunger.... Our youth must have adequate education in dealing with all of the foregoing dangers that they are facing in this life.

Every child has the inherent right to be nurtured, protected, loved, and respected. The immediate parents, extended family, and every adult in the community are responsible to guarantee and provide these inherent rights.

We must relearn traditional ways of behavior, and we must teach our children the appropriate acceptable sexual behavior of our traditional teachings. For those already sexually active, safer sex may keep them alive while we bring them home. **We Want Our Children To Live.**

Furthermore, our true traditional leaders have warned us about all of the changes that would threaten this land and life. These things are symbolized by: the Bible which takes us away from our traditional teachings; the fiddle (music that leads us away from our duties and responsibilities); the bottle (alcohol and other drugs that alter the mind); and the thing that they said would drive our people totally crazy is gambling, symbolized by cards. And they warn us that we must reaffirm our traditional way of life.

In talking about future generations, our true leaders know that our duty is to protect and make decisions on behalf of the next seven generations to ensure that the environment they inherit will

be at least as good as that which we have had. The present so-called recognized leadership is willing to turn our sacred lands into toxic waste sites. These people would allow our sacred mountains, e.g., Mt. Shasta and Mt. Graham, to become ski resorts, mining areas, and observatories. We are losing our rain forests, Yew and Redwood trees at an alarming rate. The oxygen is being polluted and depleted. Our waters are being poisoned and we now face birth defects and death.

As the droughts continue and water levels lower, sediments will be exposed. We have been warned that these sediments can harm the lungs and will cause a respiratory disease.

It doesn't take a prophet or scientist to see what is happening to the whole environment. Many people are now agreeing with our traditional Elders that all life on this planet is threatened.

We urge everyone who reads or hears this message to turn their politics around, to care for our children and families, and to live in harmony and balance with Mother Earth.