



QUECHAN NEWS

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Tribe Occupies The Ocotillo Valley

Only a week after receiving the Quechan Tribe's petition for an injunction to halt Pattern Energy's Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Project, a Federal judge denied the request, allowing the continued destruction of a scenic, environmentally fragile and culturally important area east of El Centro.

But the Quechan Tribe simply won't accept that first volley, fired by the court, as the final word in an on-going struggle to take back control of the Ocotillo Valley. The land which Interior Secretary Ken Salazar signed over to Pattern Energy still shelters the remains of ancestors from almost every Tribe which migrated through Southern California over the past 40,000 years. Just this spring, the Quechan Tribe partnered with other Tribes to conduct a quick survey of the main portion of the Ocotillo Express work site, and located six more possible cremation sites. That fact alone demonstrates the Tribes' argument that much more *must* be done to prevent the wholesale destruction of



Tribal members and area supporters gather under the traditional ramada built in the center of the Pattern Energy worksite, listening to Quechan Tribal elder Vernon Smith (at far right). Mr. Smith spent nearly two hours of Saturday, June 3rd explaining his understanding of the history and meaning of the various types of *kwat'san* songs. Among those present on Saturday were elders Preston Arrow-weed and his sister, Ila Dunsweiler, and Quechan Cultural Committee member Lorey Cachora. QUECHAN NEWS Photo by William Isbell

our cultural origins.

To demonstrate the Tribes' continued opposition to the proposed wind energy project, the Quechan Tribe quickly arranged a new occupation of the site, repeating last October's march to Ocotillo which brought hundreds of people from all over southern California to the valley for three days of ceremony and instruction.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, Brian Golding, Sr.

joined forces with Dan and Lyman Golding, Kenrick Escalanti and Christian Lopez, to begin construction of a traditional ramada at the worksite. By Tuesday, May 29th, it was finished.

That same day, with little more than a verbal request and a one-page memo of authority, Cathie Soliz of the Quechan Tribe Property and Supply Office was then able to marshal the resources of a myriad of Tribal Entities and Depart-

ments, putting together a logistical support organization to transport food, water, shade structures, firewood, tables and chairs and dozens of Tribal members over 90 miles to Ocotillo and back for a five-day occupation of the Pattern Energy worksite. The occupation began only a day after the "marching orders" came down, as the Cultural Committee and Tribal Council joined forces with lo-

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