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EI-18495
CG

March 16, 2011

RE: DM&E Comment and review letter dated November 23, 2010

Dear Ms. Glidden:

Sorry for the delay in my response. Whoever wrote that letter sure picked everything apart. I already sent them a copy of my response. If the project does proceed I am asking for consultation regarding the letter dated November 23, 2010. The hardest thing is to explain our thought process to people who do not or maybe even cannot conceive what we believe the earth to be and our relationship to it. It is knowledge that is not excepted in the world of science always only being the observer, when for us we are the observed and the observer at same time. I don't know if my response is strong enough, please keep me updated on this project as news comes available.

Sincerely

Lana M. Gravatt

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

Yankton Sioux Tribe



March 1, 2011

DM&E
Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation

RE: Response to the letter Dated November 23, 2010 from DM&E to the Office of Environmental Analysis, Surface transportation board in regards to 21 archeological sites

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to affirm that our traditional homelands are within the area of this proposed project. Are all the requirements for NEPA and NHPA fulfilled, has a full TCP survey been conducted, is the trust responsibility understood? Let it be known that the Lakota/Nakota/Dakota (LND) people do not separate the earth into categories of property. It is simply sacred. Further a TCP investigation is not an archeological survey neither is it an ethnographic study of an area known to be historically occupied by the LND and these are not religious sites. Please do not refer to them as such. I would like to answer your questions.

1. Do all stone features represent ritual or ceremonial activities? Yes because we have a cultural belief that all of creation is our relative and the stone being the first. The potential is always there more than not to say that all stone features represent ritual or ceremonial activities for the LND people.
2. Do all ritual or ceremonial activities constitute historic events; and consequently all stone feature sites qualify for listing in the national Registrar under Criterion A.

Again stone is alive and is a relative of the Lakota, Nakota and Dakota people. The stone has reverence as not just being an object but a living being, the 21 stone ring lodges are places that enhance the communication with the great spirit through the landscape and or creation, this is our belief, way of life that in history is very much misunderstood and even now it seems to hard to grasp by the people in the position to hear us and help us protect the earth. These stone ring lodges are significant because they can be used again and again and again, now that we know they are there. Lets not forget that our people were subject to systematic, intentional genocide, all atrocities included. So for your company to nit pick and say that the Indians didn't know they were there is disturbingly funny and insulting at the same time. In the footprints of our past and today the vision quest is paramount in our culture (stone ring lodge). It is direct communication with the Great Spirit. The vision quest of Crazy Horse and Black Elk still provide information and protect our people today. The stone ring lodges are very significant



to our people, in that it is the way we practice and believe. This is the way the creator gave us. Ask the creator yourself and see what happens. I suggest your company and educate themselves in our culture so you might know how significant the landscape is to us, to our well being, to our children and grandchildren. Yes all stone ring lodges must be considered eligible as a historic event. Why? Just look at the effect Crazy Horse and Black Elk have on our country today and if you know nothing about them please educate yourselves and you will see. Further, the fact that we are all related is true, its not an assumption.

Your concerns under criterion D that a property must have yielded or have the potential to yield important information to qualify relates to its potential to address important research questions about human history or prehistory that can be answered through study related to the physical materials of the property. This is only the beginning in this area. Just because modern science and archeology don't except the concept of stone having a spirit as you and I do does not mean that it is not true. This is true for the LND. The stone ring lodges or vision quest is related to the Oceti sakowin, the Seven Council Fires of the Sioux and it is only academic speculation that we came from somewhere else when every Sioux tribe will assure you that we came from the Great Wind Cave of the Black Hills South Dakota. The Lakota/Nakota/Dakota cannot separate the physical from the spiritual, it is simply not in us, it is alien to say the least.

Finally if a particular period is needed any archeologist will know that the middle archaic is the height of archeology because our lands were raped of any remnants of cultural artifacts from our burial grounds, village sites and whatever could be found scattered across the landscape after we were militarily forced onto reservations and held there in captive well into the 19th century. I am confidant in saying that we have been here since the beginning, everything else is speculation. We will need more consultation on your response should this project somehow proceed. Please call or email me at gravattlana@yahoo.com.

Respectfully


Lana M. Gravatt
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota