



NCAI NEWS

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MEDIA ADVISORY

“SOVEREIGNTY RUN” TO BEGIN WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 11 ON THE QUINAULT (WASH.) INDIAN RESERVATION

- WHAT:** Historic 2,800-mile cross-country coast-to-coast “Sovereignty Run” relay race to raise awareness of American Indian tribal sovereignty – the right to self government. More than 600 runners representing tribes throughout the United States, and supporting runners, will participate in the Sovereignty Run, which will travel through the states of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Washington, DC. Noted Quinault tribal cultural leader Guy Capoeman is preparing a staff for the runners to carry cross-country. The race will conclude on Monday, Oct. 7, at the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. Upon the runners’ arrival at the steps of the Supreme Court on Oct. 7, tribal leaders will hold a rally to educate the audience and the media about the issues identified in the Initiative.
- WHERE:** The race begins at Taholah, Wash., located on the Quinault Reservation. (Taholah is located on the southwest coast of the Olympic Peninsula, approximately two hours west of Seattle.)
- WHEN:** Wednesday, Sept. 11
8 a.m. -- Sovereignty Run opening ceremonies.
8:30 a.m. -- Sovereignty Run begins.
10 a.m. -- Press conference at the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino (78 State Route 115) Ocean Shores, Wash.
7 p.m. -- Reception at the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino. All supporters are welcome to attend.
- WHO:** Pearl Capoeman-Baller, Chair, Quinault Indian Nation
Anthony Pico, former Chair of the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Calif.
- WHY:** The “Sovereignty Run” is part of a larger program called the Tribal Governance and Economic Enhancement Initiative, also known as the Sovereignty

Protection Initiative. The Initiative, which was launched in September 2001, is a coordinated all-tribal strategy designed to address the increasing diminishment of tribal self-government and jurisdiction as a result of recent Supreme Court rulings, such as Nevada vs. Hicks and Atkinson Trading Co. v. Shirley – decisions that have raised strong concerns among tribes that the Supreme Court is on an accelerating trend over the past 20 years toward removing tribal jurisdiction within tribal territories. The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the Navajo Nation and prominent American Indian tribal leaders are spearheading the Initiative.

It is of particular significant that the Sovereignty Run will end at the steps of the United States Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. – the site of a number of devastating court decisions that have been delivered against tribes over the past two decades. These decisions, made by the highest court in the land, are responsible for the continued erosion of tribal sovereignty. 1964 Olympic Gold Medalist Billy Mills will participate in the Run as it arrives in the District of Columbia. Oct. 7 also is the first day of the Court's 2003 term.

CONTACT:

For Run information, contact Fawn Sharp, Sovereignty Run Team Leader at (360) 276-8215, ext. 329. For information on the Initiative, contact Shelby Settles of NCAI at (202) 466-7767. Visit the Sovereignty Run Web site at: <http://www.sovrun.org>.

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