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CONVERSATIONS WITH CLAN MOTHERS: Searching for Meaning in a National Statue
By Katya Miller

Atop the U.S. Capitol Dome in Washington, D.C., stands the magnificent Statue of Freedom. With her eagle-feathered headdress, she has stood guard over the dome for more than 150 years. A significant symbol of our nation's history and identity, on par with the Statue of Liberty, she is frequently seen on nightly news broadcasts, yet she is largely invisible and unrecognized.

The Statue of Freedom in front of the Capitol before she was placed back on top of the dome after her renovation in 1993.

My background is in fine arts, and I worked for years as a metalsmith. After reading about this statue in 1993, and connecting to her spirit, I felt the need to share her story. I began reaching out to historians and scholars who might have clues to my questions. For more than 25 years, I pored over maps, atlases, and hundreds of documents in the Office of the Curator. I met with historians at the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, and other D.C. institutions. Who was this Statue of Freedom? What did her headdress represent? And how did the mixture of European and Native American imagery that adorn her, come to be created? Ironically, these questions would not be answered by historians or archivists. In the lives and knowledge of real Native American and Canadian women was where I would find the meaning of her Native symbols, which I was determined to clarify and understand.

So, in the spring of 1997, I drove my son's car from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst to Nedrow, New York, near Syracuse, where I spent two days with Alice Papineau Dewasenta. She was a Clan Mother at Onondaga, the smallest of the Iroquois' Six Nations, aka the Haudenosaunee, dedicated to the balance among humans, plant and animal kingdoms, and the Creator. Alice lived on a small piece of land left of the 900 million acres of original Haudenosaunee territory. She was in her late 80s and still a vital and outspoken advocate for her people. Today the people of Onondaga continue to keep the Central Fire Council and the knowledge of how to survive as a nation. Alice Papineau Dewasenta, Haudenosaunee Clan Mother

Alice had always wondered about the Statue of Freedom's crowning feature and was glad I was addressing it. Her son spoke proudly about their lacrosse team. Lacrosse is a traditional game invented by Native Americans. He showed me his Gustoweh, the headpiece worn by Onondaga chiefs, made of turkey, hawk, or eagle feathers. It was similar to the statue's headpiece but likely not its primary influence.

I feel privileged and grateful to have met Alice, and to have learned from her. When I moved from California to New Mexico, one of my first acquaintances was Greg Schaaf, a historian of Native peoples. When he found out about my research into the Statue of Freedom and her native connections, he asked me if I would like to meet a "Clan Mother." I had never heard of a Clan Mother, and honestly, I didn't know such a role existed.

Seven Generations of Shenandoah

I knew there were matriarchal societies scattered from east to west, but I had not seen anything written about them. I was given an album of music called *Matriarch*, by Iroquois singer-songwriter Joanne Shenandoah, which I played repeatedly. A few years later, I met Joanne and her husband, Mohawk author and historian Doug George-Kanentiio. I shared the history of the Statue of Freedom with them, and explained how the imagery had evolved through the years. Later, when they spoke and sang their songs in 2013 for the U.S. Presidential Inauguration, Doug told me they had invoked the U.S. government's Native roots.

Joanne's role as a cultural ambassador allowed her to share her unique talent in representing her people. The songs in her many albums reflect the traditional values of the Haudenosaunee. Women, as life-givers, and custodians of Mother Earth, are the true matriarchs monitoring the

land's resources. I learned that Clan Mothers are selected among the mothers, serving as spiritual advisors, political counselors, and healers within their families and communities. Joanne told me that her house sits on the homestead of John Shenandoah, who had been longtime friends with Benjamin Franklin. John was her seventh-generation ancestor who died there at the age of 110. She said, "Our family holds the oval Peace and Friendship Medallion bestowed upon [John] by George Washington. I heard that he was at Independence Hall for the signing of the Declaration of Independence!" Seven generations later, descendants carry on their cultural traditions at the very place where he lived. It is said that Washington named the Shenandoah River and Mountain in John Shenandoah's honor, in recognition of the critical Haudenosaunee contribution to the Revolutionary War, bringing Washington and his troops food and supplies during the harsh winter of 1777.

Rematriation

Today, Joanne's niece, Michele Shenandoah, carries on her ancestors' passion for protecting their lands and bringing about the truthful telling of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy's influence on democracy throughout the world. With the guidance of her mother, Faith Keeper and Sculptress Diane Shenandoah, Michelle has seeded Rematriation, based on the concept of Seven Generations, with love, forgiveness, and peace. They are Keepers of the Land and see it as a relative, not a resource.

Michelle's organization helps to strengthen their traditional teachings, and to heal from the impacts of colonization. They are truly returning the Sacred to the Mother, aka Rematriation.

Martha Washington Honors Polly Cooper Bronze Statue: Allies in War, Partners in Peace

Allies in War, Partners in Peace is a 20-foot-tall bronze sculpture by Edward Hlavka and is on display at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, which stands across from the plaster model of the Statue of Freedom in the U.S Capitol. It commemorates the aid the Oneida people gave George Washington and his struggling Continental Army during the early days of the American Revolution. Polly Cooper is in the center, with George Washington and Oneida chief Shenandoah behind her on either side. They stand under a towering white pine, emblem of the Great Law of Peace. Intricate details of Oneida culture abound in the assemblage, such as the Turtle, Wolf, and Bear representing the three Oneida clans at their feet. An eagle is on the top branches of the white pine, poised to warn the nations of approaching perils.

The Statue of Freedom stands tall and proud like the Great Tree of Peace, with its weapons of war buried deep beneath its roots. In his hands, George Washington carries a wampum belt, indicative of agreements between him and the Oneidas.

Wampum belts were significant in ratifying of treaties and covenants between indigenous people and European colonial powers. As an example of the function and use of wampum, the Haudenosaunee people living along the coast collected the shells, produced the beads, and traded them inland for furs, corn, beans, and squash.

It is well-known that George Washington and Benjamin Franklin admired the Iroquois Confederacy's concepts and principles of governance, and they exchanged many ideas. During the harsh winter of 1777 during the American Revolution, Franklin asked Shenandoah for help from his people to hunt and provide food for Washington's army. Polly Cooper and a group of fellow Oneidas, walked 400 miles from their Central New York home to the Continental Army winter quarters at Valley Forge. They brought vital supplies, which included corn, to the army

and taught the soldiers how to prepare their native foods. The Oneida refused all payments for their service.

Polly Cooper is an example of the courage, generosity, and indomitable spirit of the Oneida people. She is famous for being “the Oneida Woman Who Saved Washington’s Army.” A grateful Martha Washington knitted Polly a shawl that is still in possession of her descendants and viewed as one of the great relics of the Oneida people. For saving George Washington and his troops at Valley Forge, Shenandoah was given a Peace Medal by President Washington.

Tragically, Washington was not kind to the Iroquois. In 1779, he ordered the Army generals, Sullivan and Clinton, to rampage the Oneida people’s food supply and animals, in what is called the “scorched-earth” campaign. This gave the first president of the United States a reputation as a “town destroyer” to the survivors who, as a direct result, were pushed off their lands along the eastern seaboard.

Mother of her nation Mohawk Bear Clan Mother, Louise Herne

Mohawk Bear Clan Mother, Louise Herne (affectionally known as Momma Bear) is exactly what her name implies: a strong mother who is fiercely protective of her people. As she watched a short PBS program about the Statue of Freedom in January of 2021, she heard something that bothered her. The film concluded that the Statue of Freedom, seen in silhouette against the D.C. skyline, was “Sky Woman,” a visage from the Mohawk sacred Creation Story. The producers of the film had not consulted her, or her people, about that.

Perturbed and a little curious, Mama Bear contacted me through a mutual friend and historian, Sally Roesch Wagner. Louise wanted the correct history to be told and asked my opinion about the Statue of Freedom’s identity. In the end, we agreed that there were similarities with the Statue’s story but concluded that she was not Sky Woman. The ongoing cultural exchange between us was heartfelt and grew as we dialogued about current issues with a deep respect for women’s lives.

In the film, *Without a Whisper*, by Katsitsionni Fox, Momma Bear sits on a stage with Gloria Steinem and other women leaders in New York City. When the grandmothers first heard about feminism. Louise states very clearly what her grandmother said: “We are not feminists; we are the Law.” She adds, “Until women are put at the forefront of community with leadership positions, decision- making power, and a voice for the people, this country will not be the superpower it was intended to be: Leader of the Free World. This includes putting our mothers, sisters, daughters, and granddaughters upfront, and they should be on the currency and statues across the city and the nation.”

Meeting with these Clan Mothers as they shared their stories with me, has been a great privilege, considering the generosity and power of the Clan Mother—who is a mother to her nation. The more we shared, the more we could envision a new dream of a better world together. Mama Bear stated, “Everything comes from the life-giving force of women. They are natural policymakers.” She continued, “There cannot be true democracy without the Mother. Women are the givers of life.”

Lady Freedom Points To Democracy’s Origins

After learning of the complex and tragic history between the Iroquois and the colonists, I see the Statue of Freedom with new eyes. The statue, whom I call Lady Freedom, represents all the

people as she merges European and Native cultures while standing on the great Earth Mother. A sense of peace, balance, and power emanates from her as she looks out to her nation, the United States of America.

Lady Freedom was placed atop the Capitol in the middle of the Civil War with rich and meaningful Roman, Greek, and Native imagery. It is time for the people of our country to know more about that powerful statue. Native women have birthed their children and held their tribes together for centuries. They are glad to see aspects of their culture atop the dome but wait for their roles to be recognized in history books and public discourse. Telling their stories is one way to begin healing these courageous people's traumas. And it will deepen every American's understanding of what it is to be a true citizen of this nation.

Envision the world the way you want to become.
—Fallan Jacobs, Kanien'keha:ka

Author KATYA MILLER is a Cultural Historian, speaker, filmmaker, and metalsmith. She writes about American history, sculpture, and art – particularly about the history of Freedom, the woman represented as the Statue of Freedom atop the U.S. Capitol dome. Her contacts are miller.katya@gmail.com, and www.katyamiller.com. ***(Check out original article for pics)***

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*Shayne: Can you put me on your mailing list?*

*I am writing a book about the Statue of Freedom atop the US Capitol Dome. She combines Euro-american and Native American symbology. Check out my website [miller.katya@gmail.com](http://miller.katya@gmail.com)*



## **INTRODUCING KATYA MILLER**

***“I hope people will now look upon the dome to see the Statue of Freedom, a connection between the earth and sky, politicians and the people, and a story for future generations.”***

KATYA MILLER is a citizen historian, speaker, filmmaker, and metalsmith. She writes about American history, sculpture, and art – particularly about the history of Freedom, the woman represented as the Statue of Freedom atop the US Capitol dome.

When Katya received a message from the spirit of the statue in 1993, her journey began.

Her decades of research are evident in her articles published at the Capitol Historical Society magazine The Capitol Dome. Her work was recognized by the Curator and Historian at the Capitol who awarded her a US Capitol Research Fellowship to write a book in progress.



### Scholarships (G-P) with April 1 Deadline

|                                                                          |          |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| <a href="#">George A. Strait Minority Scholarship</a>                    | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Gerald W. &amp; Edith F. Wallace Scholarship</a>             | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">GFWC Women's Club of South County Scholarship</a>            | \$2,571  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">GM Women's Retail Network Drive to Succeed Scholarship</a>   | \$5,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Golden Apple Scholars of Illinois</a>                        | \$23,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">GRCF Donald J. DeYoung Scholarship</a>                       | \$5,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">GRCF Grand Rapids Combined Theatre Scholarship</a>           | \$5,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Greentown Athletic Club J. Carl Brosch Scholarship</a>       | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Hearing Impaired Scholarship</a>                             | \$12,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Hedy Lamarr Achievement Award</a>                            | \$10,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Heinlein Society Scholarships</a>                            | \$4,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Herbert Hoover Uncommon Student Award</a>                    | \$11,500 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Herman J. Neal Scholarship</a>                               | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Ike Foundation Scholarship</a>                               | \$2,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Illinois CPA Society Accounting Scholarship</a>              | \$4,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Iowa Scholarships for the Arts</a>                           | \$3,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Italian Catholic Federation First Year Scholarship</a>       | \$1,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Jack &amp; Julie Narcolepsy Scholarship</a>                  | \$1,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Janet Logan Daily Foundation Scholarship</a>                 | \$10,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Jean L. Jensen Language Arts Scholarship</a>                 | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Joseph R. Calder, Jr., MD Scholarship Fund</a>               | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Karis S. (Powell) Woodward, RN, Nursing Scholarship Fund</a> | \$1,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <b><a href="#">Kenny C. Guinn Scholarship</a></b>                        | \$5,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Kress Foundation Interpretive Fellowships</a>                | \$30,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Kylie Murray Memorial Flight Training Scholarship</a>        | \$11,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">LaFontaine Aquatic Entomology Scholarship</a>                | Varies   | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Land Conservancy of New Jersey Scholarships</a>              | \$10,000 | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Leo Bourassa Scholarship</a>                                 | \$3,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">LERMI Supports Law Enforcement</a>                           | \$1,500  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Letters to Strangers Scholarships</a>                        | \$3,000  | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Lettie Pate Whitehead Scholarship Program</a>                | \$1,000  | April 01, 2025 |
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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <a href="#">Lewis Cenker Scholarship</a>                                          | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">LexisNexis John R. Johnson Memorial Scholarship</a>                   | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Livelikemak Foundation Scholarship</a>                                | \$5,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">MG James Ursano Scholarship Fund</a>                                  | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Michigan Retailers Association Scholarships</a>                       | \$3,500      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Michigan State University Michigan Resident Scholarship</a>           | Full-Tuition | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">MidMichigan Health Bailey Scholarships</a>                            | \$2,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Montana Space Grant Consortium Graduate Fellowships</a>               | \$11,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Musical Merit Foundation of Greater San Diego Scholarship Awards</a>  | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Naugatuck Valley Medical Scholarship Fund</a>                         | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Naval Officers' Spouses' Club Scholarships</a>                        | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">NEEBC Scholarship Program</a>                                         | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">New Mexico Tech Regents Scholarship</a>                               | \$15,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">New Mexico Tech Transfer Excel Scholarship</a>                        | \$12,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">New Mexico Tech Transfer Scholarship</a>                              | \$6,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">New York Farm Bureau AG Youth Scholarship</a>                         | \$3,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">New York Senate Graduate Fellowships</a>                              | \$50,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">North Texas Relocation Professionals Scholarship</a>                  | \$3,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">North Texas Seniors who have Relocated Scholarship</a>                | \$3,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Northern Illinois University AIM HIGH Scholarship</a>                 | Varies       | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">NSPE Steinman Scholarship</a>                                         | \$5,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">NWFA Education &amp; Research Foundation Wood Studies Scholarship</a> | \$1,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Officer Collin Rose Memorial Foundation Scholarship</a>               | \$1,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program</a>                           | Full-Tuition | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Orangewood Foundation Advanced Studies Scholarship</a>                | \$10,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Oregon State Sheriff's Association Scholarship</a>                    | \$2,000      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Page Education Foundation Grants</a>                                  | \$3,500      | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Peace Officers Memorial Foundation Scholarship</a>                    | \$500        | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Peters Foundation Scholarship</a>                                     | \$20,000     | April 01, 2025 |
| <a href="#">Powering Education Scholarship</a>                                    | \$2,000      | April 01, 2025 |

## **How artificial intelligence uses a lot of water — and why that’s a concern for states like Arizona**

“Artificial intelligence is growing in popularity, with users asking for its assistance with all kinds of tasks. But AI uses a lot of water, which is in increasingly short supply in places like Arizona. Shaolei Ren, an associate professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of California, Riverside, works on machine learning optimization and sustainability. Ren joined The Show to talk through some of this, starting with a broad question: what exactly is the relationship between AI and water usage?” [Listen to podcast or read transcript at KJZZ.](#)

## **Are data centers depleting the Southwest’s water and energy resources?**

“Iron Mountain’s AZP-1 data center is tucked under the curve of Highway 202, just before it meets Highway 143. It’s next to a post office, a laundromat, and a pizza-and-wings joint. Roughly the size of a city block, the data center’s campus appears to consist of a chrome-and-glass office building, several other low, concrete buildings with no windows, a half-full parking lot, rows of electrical boxes, and cooling towers. Signs in English and Spanish warn of high voltage. Security is intense: the property is surrounded by, at various places, a wrought-iron fence, a concrete wall, and barbed wire, punctuated by security booths with guards who will, if you step off the sidewalk, remind you that you are on private property. This data center is one of three that Iron Mountain operates in metropolitan Phoenix. In 2023, Google broke ground on a data center in Mesa, Arizona. Microsoft also operates data centers in El Mirage and Goodyear. All together, Phoenix hosts about 707 megawatts of IT capacity, more than any major city besides Dallas. ... ” [Read more from APM Research Lab.](#)

## **Supreme Court deals blow to wastewater regulations, nixing generic restrictions on discharge permits**

“The Environmental Protection Agency lost its Supreme Court battle over generic permit standards for wastewater discharges on Tuesday. In a 5-4 decision, the high court sided with the city of San Francisco, finding that the EPA’s so-called “end-result” requirements, which held certain permit recipients responsible for the quality of water they discharged pollutants into, was unlawful. Justice Samuel Alito, a George W. Bush appointee, wrote the court’s opinion and said that the practice exceeded the EPA’s statutory authority under the Clean Water Act and was “not necessary to protect water quality.” Alito, joined by Chief Justice John Roberts and justices Clarence Thomas, Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch, said that the EPA could conduct individual assessments for wastewater facilities rather than rely on a blanket rule. “If the EPA does its work, our holding should have no adverse effect on water quality,” Alito wrote. ... ”

[Read more from the Courthouse News Service.](#)

## **SEE ALSO:**

- [Supreme Court rules against EPA in water permitting case](#), from E&E News
- [Supreme Court strikes down EPA rules on discharge of water pollution](#), from the Washington Post



**Trump, Musk plan to shutter federal offices includes Arcata site for NOAA Fisheries, Redwood National Park staff**

“President Donald Trump and Elon Musk’s plan to dramatically downsize the federal government has placed a bullseye on an Arcata field office that houses roughly ~~two dozen~~ 65 full-time employees of agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries and Redwood National Park. Following the first wave in a massive purge of federal employees carried out by the Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), the administration now plans to close more than 2 million square feet of office space being used by the Department of the Interior, which oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey and other agencies. The General Services Administration’s (GSA) lease-termination list includes 1655 Heindon Rd. in Arcata, a 25,500-square-foot office building off Giuntoli Lane, near Toni’s 24-Hour Restaurant. According to a former federal employee who spoke on condition of anonymity, the office’s lease is scheduled to be terminated at the end of September. ... ” [Read more from the Lost Coast Outpost.](#)

**NID initiating the process of declaring exempt surplus land.meant for Centennial Dam: District voted to not pursue dam project in September 2024**

[https://www.theunion.com/news/nid-initiating-the-process-of-declaring-exempt-surplus-land-meant-for-centennial-dam-district-voted/article\\_a67cb5be-f883-11ef-a7cb-6f5b7a6f53e8.html](https://www.theunion.com/news/nid-initiating-the-process-of-declaring-exempt-surplus-land-meant-for-centennial-dam-district-voted/article_a67cb5be-f883-11ef-a7cb-6f5b7a6f53e8.html)

***Will tribes rematriate this land?***

**Mono Lake: DWP preparing aggressive hearing strategy**



“The Mono Lake Committee is actively preparing for the upcoming California State Water Resources Control Board hearing in 2025 about Mono Lake’s low level, its unfulfilled protection mandate, and modifying the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power’s (DWP) stream diversions to achieve implementation. The work includes a wide range of activities, such as staff research, working with expert witnesses, running hydrologic models, talking with allies, and preparing legal presentations. The Committee’s position is straightforward: In 1994 the State Water Board required that a sustainable 6,392-foot management level for Mono Lake be achieved by approximately 2014. That hasn’t happened, so water diversion changes are necessary to put implementation back on track. Those facts are clear, so the question often arises: What position and arguments will DWP present? ... ” [Read more from the Mono Lake Committee.](#)

## **Wrecking Ball Report: At Reclamation, a view from the inside**



“Elevated from the comments, observations from former Reclamation manager Doug Blatchford: “When I joined the Reclamation team in 2005 as the River Operation Manager on the Colorado River, part of my duties was to prepare a business plan to direct future business decisions based on the operations budget and services required (like delivering water to 20 million people). Part of the business plan was succession planning; I estimated it took at least 5 years to hire a replacement for say, the oracle data base manager, and that hire would shadow the retiree to affect a smooth transition. Just letting experienced (20, 30, 40 yr employees...) retire without planning was difficult enough inside the Federal system, let alone just taking a wrecking ball and eliminating 40 percent of the work force. ... ” [Read more from the Inkstain blog](#). **SEE ALSO: “We get to determine what kind of apocalypse we’d like to have.”, from Inkstain**

### **Senate Democrats urge Trump administration to end Colorado River funding freeze**

“Senate Democrats from the U.S. West on Monday urged the Department of the Interior to end a funding freeze that could endanger the flow of the Colorado River. The lawmakers, from California, Nevada and Arizona, slammed the Trump administration’s day-one executive order that halted disbursements from the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act — including \$4 billion that Congress had earmarked for water management and conservation in the West. Among the projects that were supposed to benefit from those funds was the Lower Colorado River System Conservation and Efficiency Program, which had aimed to raise the elevation of Lake Mead — the basin’s largest reservoir — by 9 feet this year, the senators wrote in [a letter](#) to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum. ... ” [Read more from The Hill](#).

### **Judge adds U.S. Fish and Wildlife to order curbing DOGE firings**

“U.S. District Judge William Alsup amended an oral ruling and ordered the Trump administration’s personnel director to rescind memos that led to the firing of probationary employees at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Alsup issued a written order Feb. 28 elaborating on his ruling from the bench the day before in San Francisco. Alsup affirmed the Office of Personnel Management can’t order other agencies to fire workers, undercutting the White House’s ability to orchestrate cuts in the federal workforce. “No statute — anywhere, ever — has granted OPM the authority to direct the termination of employees in other agencies,” Alsup wrote. ... ” [Read more from the Capital Press](#).

### **Farmers depend on climate data. They're suing the USDA for deleting it.**

In late January, the director of digital communications at the U.S. Department of Agriculture sent an email to staff instructing them to remove agency web pages related to climate change by the end of the following day. Read in Grist: <https://apple.news/AVN87LQLZTdymeK24MtWThg>

**San Francisco Wins Raw Sewage Case**  
**The U.S. Supreme Court ruling is seen as a blow to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which can issue "crushing penalties" to cities.**

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**Over 50 Years of Environmental Protections — Gone Overnight**

Extract: On February 25, 2025, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) quietly detonated a bomb in the *Federal Register*: they erased every single regulation that has governed NEPA for nearly half a century. These regulations, crafted under Jimmy Carter in 1978, have been the law of the land for how federal projects assess environmental impacts — followed by every administration, Republican and Democrat, ever since.

Until now.

They didn't tweak them. They didn't amend them. They torched them. No replacements — just a complete wipeout of the rules that protected America's air, water, wildlife, and communities for generations.

[https://morethanjustparks.substack.com/p/over-50-years-of-environmental-protections?publication\\_id=1594349&post\\_id=158063063&triggerShare=true&isFreemail=true&r=1spl43&triedRedirect=true](https://morethanjustparks.substack.com/p/over-50-years-of-environmental-protections?publication_id=1594349&post_id=158063063&triggerShare=true&isFreemail=true&r=1spl43&triedRedirect=true)

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<https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/national-international/donald-trump-full-speech-congress/3858808>

**Read and watch Donald Trump's joint address to Congress**  
**Trump spoke for roughly 1 hour and 40 minutes, setting a record for the longest address to a joint session of Congress. By NBC Staff •**

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Reader comment on state of things:

*I expected this. But more saddening is native people who voted wrong are now reaping the effects.*

*I heard there was 112 IHS workers in Arizona fired, my friend who worked for BIA in AZ was fired last week.*

*Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe-Einstein*

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**This Is How Stephen Hawking Predicted The End Of The World**

<https://www.grunge.com/134971/this-is-how-stephen-hawking-predicted-the-end-of-the-world/>

More: <https://www.grunge.com/36598/untold-truth-stephen-hawking/>