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Hopi LCR Trial- -Fourth Week

The Hopi Little Colorado River water rights trial continued into its fourth week on October 1, 2018. This first of several trials is on Hopi past and present use of water on the Hopi Reservation. The United States, as trustee for the Hopi Tribe, finished its case-in-chief during the last week of September.

The Hopi case in chief began with Dr. Chuck Adams and Kenny Calhoun testifying on October 1.

Dr. Chuck Adams is an archaeologist and the curator of the Arizona State Museum. He is very knowledgeable about Hopi. He worked an archaeological excavation on Hopi for several years resulting in reports filed with the Museum on Northern Arizona and, as curator; he cares for the Hopi artifacts at the State Museum.

Dr. Adams estimated the Hopi population as 12,000 before the Spanish encounter. Using anthropological evidence that it would take 2.5 acres of native farming to support one Hopi, he estimated that the Hopis would have farmed at least 30,000 acres prior to the Spanish Encounter.

Kenny Calhoun works with DB Stephens in Albuquerque, a firm that has provided hydrological services to the Hopi. He prepared maps of every well, spring and impoundment on the reservation with coordinates as to their location and other attributes.

After these expert witnesses, the Hopi Tribe began presenting actual Hopi witnesses. At this point in the trial, the Court had heard only expert witnesses. It was time for the Hopi to speak for themselves.

Lionel Puhuyesva, the Hopi former Water Director, testified as to the infrastructure for water, the Hopi Arsenic Hamp project, water quality issues and other features of the Hopi water system. He presented this testimony considering traditional Hopi practices and custom.

Micah Loma'omvaya testified as to Hopi religion and beliefs, as well as Hopi culture and traditions. He eloquently pointed out the differences between the Hopi culture and the Western culture, and the interlinked values of farming, water and ceremonies. Finally, at week's end, Michael Elmer testified as to farming in Moenkopi, and Priscilla Pavatea, the Rangeland director, testified as to range practices and livestock on the Hopi Reservation.

It is anticipated that the Hopi Tribe will complete its' case-in-chief by October 23. There will be only two days of trial the week of October 22 (Monday and Tuesday); and the week of October 29 (Monday and Tuesday). The Navajo Nation will start its case on October 29.

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