The collective consciousness of Chiricahua descendants have expressed a sense of loss and longing to return to ancestral lands to revitalize Chiricahua traditions and ceremony. Ancient sacred sites continue to be visited by Chiricahua from everywhere. More compelling, Apaches feel that Apache sacred sites are in danger of desecration by pollution from mining, industrial and commercial interests, even recreation.

Chiricahua people believe in the sacredness of the landscape and the environmental, spiritual and social harmony of our Usen given right to exist on the land of our ancestors. Apaches will continue to advocate for sound environmental decisions to address our concerns for our traditional lands...

- Leave no trace
- Take only what you need
- Respect the land, the animals, the plants, the air, the water, natural processes and their importance and place on earth

This land is where the people originated and all the creation stories tell how the Chiricahua learned their code of ethics, of peace and harmony, from the Mountain Spirits and White Painted Lady near a sacred spring “when the world was new,” in what is now, Southwest New Mexico. Oral history tells how the Chiricahua people then spread in the four directions from this sacred site.

**Chiricahua Apache Nd’ Nation**

We remember the stories...a call home to the Chiricahua Apache Nation. Promoting solidarity and unity among apache people, recognition and respect of each other. Our ancestors sacrificed much for us. As descendants of these strong and fearless, yet humble people, it is now our responsibility to gather from all directions and work for the restoration of our sacred native lands.

The Chiricahua, or Nd’eh, as we refer to ourselves, believed exterminated, scattered and distinctively unrecognized, must recover traditions and connection to our ancient lands to avoid acculturation and assimilation. Historically, we have been taken from lands which shaped our culture and lifeways, mostly at gunpoint. We remember the Treaty of 1872, signed by Cochine, and the treaty signed by Mangas Coloradas and the United States government, which guaranteed our existence in our inherent territory.

The Chiricahua Apache Nd’ Nation, founded in 2004, is a grassroots social justice interest group of Chiricahua Apache descendants. Without borders or boundaries, we advance strategies to recover, preserve and protect Chiricahua culture, sacred sites and ancestral homelands.

Chiricahua Land Stewardship

Chiricahua Apache Demographics

Of an estimated population of 200,000 Chiricahua Apaches at contact, there are less than 1,000 prisoner of war descendants living either on the Mescalero reservation, or on land allotments in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma.

In contrast, the population of displaced or scattered Chiricahua Apache descendants in two countries today exceed approximately 75,000 globally. This population lives on and off several Apache reservations, in rural areas, and urban centers all over mother earth.

“Chiricahua Apache Land, this has always been Apache land.”
—Geronimo, An American Legend
Since Creation…

According to Chiricahua Apache creation stories, these lands were set in perfect foundation, specifically for Chiricahua people. Our creation stories of Ussen, White Painted Woman, Child of the Water, Killer of Enemies and the Mountain Spirits, tell us that Chiricahua people have been here in our territory—now the U.S. Southwest and North Central Mexico—from time immemorial. Chiricauhua Territory

Our Homelands

Chiricahua Apaches were among the first and last peoples to resist European incursion into their homelands. The response to their resistance was genocide and war. The prolonged Apache wars and systematic theft of Chiricahua homelands resulted in a massive displacement and scattering of a people.

These events were culminated by the removal of innocent Chiricahua Apache women, children and elderly. In 1886, these Apaches were declared prisoners of war and moved first to Florida, then Alabama, and finally to Oklahoma. Many died. Some Chiricahua Apaches hid in Mexico. Others scattered to other Apache reservations, and some hid among the Hispanics, or literally hid in the mountains.

We believe that any other theory, of Apache occupation, usually only advocated by dominant society interests, only reflects the land claims issues with which the dominant society has attempted to deny Chiricahua Apaches of their rightful claim to our traditional lands... Which, in its pristine state, is very valuable for its resources: land, timber, water, minerals, plant life, grazing, wildlife and aesthetic value.

Of five reservations established specifically for the Chiricahua people in New Mexico and Arizona in the 1880’s, including several reserves in Mexico, none remain today. All these reservations were dissolved. Including the Ft. Sill reservation in Oklahoma, which was dissolved in 1914 for an artillery base.

Chiricahua Territory

The Gila Wilderness and the Silver City NM area are considered the center of the “northern stronghold” and traditional “summer grounds” of Chiricahua territory. The northern sections of Mexico’s Sierra Madre were considered the “southern stronghold” and utilized as “winter grounds.” Chiricahua territory extended to the east as far as the Rio Grande valley in New Mexico and to the west as far as the San Pedro River valley in Arizona. To the north it extended to just below the present day Hwy I-40 corridor.

In 1848, the international boundary crossed these traditional lands, dividing our homeland between two countries.

Modern population patterns show the long-term effect that the Chiricahua had on early European settlement patterns. The major cities found in the Southwest and northern Mexico, all lie at the far reaches of Chiricahua traditional lands, El Paso, TX, Albuquerque, NM, Hwy I-40 corridor, Tucson, AZ, and Chihuahua City, Mexico. Chiricahua Apache peoples may have lost ownership of our lands, but we still retain spiritual ownership of every inch of this land.