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November 16, 2012 – Native News Network - [Geronimo's Tribe The Fort Sill Apache Celebrate 1 Year of its Reservation Proclamation](#)

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DEMING, NEW MEXICO – Twenty five year old Fort Sill Apache tribal member April Darrow has lived in several places around the country but hasn't had that feeling of being home until she recently visited her Tribe's legally-defined homeland in New Mexico.



Fort Sill Apache Tribe Reservation Land

Having a homeland is a big thing to any American Indian tribe; so much of land has been taken from American Indians. Today, the Fort Sill Apache Tribe is celebrating its first anniversary of gaining reservation land near Deming, New Mexico from the US Department of the Interior.

“We are excited because our tribal leadership, many tribal members and representatives of government will be there,”

commented Tribal Chairman Jeff Haozous to the Native News Network on Wednesday.

The Fort Sill Apache Tribe was the tribe of Geronimo, one of the most revered American Indian warriors ever.

“Our tribe has almost 700 members, but that has grown from 80 in 1914,”

said Haozous, who knows the history of his Tribe well.

“To have a reservation in our homeland is really a big deal.”

The Tribe located in Apache, Oklahoma hopes to establish a permanent headquarters on their tribal reservation in New Mexico. Over half of the tribe lives away from Oklahoma. All over the world according to Chairman Haozous.

Darrow lives in Oklahoma fulfilling her dream job as the Fort Sill Apache Cultural Coordinator – a place where tribal members were released as Prisoners of War (POWs) in 1914. She believes that returning to New Mexico will help revive aspects of the Tribe's identity that have been lost due to its displacement.

The Tribe has plans for a casino on its reservation to generate funds for tribal housing and businesses and to bring its people home. A press conference will be held on the Tribe's reservation in Akela, New Mexico on the anniversary with plans to display Tribal Spirit Dancers, raise the Tribe's new flag, announce the Tribe's upcoming name change, unveil the new history wall, and provide an update of the Tribe's current efforts to bring its people home.

Those people include born and raised Californian Lorene Sisquoc, who believes that wanting to be on the land is an innate feeling and part of her DNA. She's also the great-great-granddaughter of Mangas Coloradas and Chief Loco.

“Going to New Mexico for the first time was very emotional for me. It was the first time I could say I'm going to my reservation,”

Sisquoc said.

Tribal members like Darrow, Sisquoc and Bob Haozous, son of famous artist Allan Houser, have waited more than 125 years to return to their homeland and want to share their continued struggle with our readers.

According to tribal leaders the Tribe has always planned to return to its homeland after being forcefully removed as Prisoners of War in 1886. Now they are ready to do so, despite New Mexico's unsupportive Republican Governor Susana Martinez.

The Tribe has modified its flag for today's ceremony.