

The Skull Valley Goshutes and the Nuclear Storage...

Summary

The student will be able to comprehend how tribal sovereignty is complicated by disagreements over land use, economic development, and state vs. federal control. They will also understand the economic and ecological variables that have shaped the Skull Valley Band of Goshute's attempted acquisition of a nuclear waste storage facility.

Time Frame

2 class periods of 90 minutes each

Materials

Teacher Materials

- [At a Glance: Goshute Sovereignty and the Contested West Desert](#) (pdf)

Video: [We Shall Remain: The Goshute](#)

Student Materials

Debate: Should the Goshutes Build a Temporary Nuclear Waste Storage Site on the Skull Valley Reservation?

YES: [Forrest Cuch](#) (pdf)

NO: [Margene Bullcreek](#) (pdf)

Background for Teachers

The Skull Valley Band of Goshute Reservation, located approximately forty-five miles southwest of Salt Lake City, was established by executive order in 1912 and covers 17,248 acres. With limited land holdings in a sparse, secluded landscape, the Skull Valley Band has struggled to develop a viable economic base. In the 1990s, the nation's executive council undertook efforts to locate a temporary nuclear waste storage site on the reservation. The history of this controversial issue highlights the Goshutes' struggle for sovereignty, economic independence, and environmental security.

Instructional Procedures

Using information from *At a Glance: Goshute Sovereignty and the Contested West Desert* and clips from *We Shall Remain: The Goshute*, teach your students about the controversy over nuclear waste storage on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Reservation. Emphasize the way these issues are related to tribal sovereignty and economic stability.

Split your students into debate teams and assign each team a position either for or against temporary nuclear waste storage on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Reservation. Provide each "debate team" with a starter oral history excerpt and have them search for at least three additional credible sources of their own. Remind them to keep the focus of their arguments on sovereignty.

Have students debate their topics and judge as is appropriate for your classroom.

Extensions

Rather than having in-class debates, ask students to do a research paper on the issue of Goshute nuclear waste storage. Make sure they articulate the arguments on both sides of the issue and tie their arguments to the issue of tribal sovereignty.

Have students research other issues related to Goshute tribal sovereignty, such as the Southern Nevada Water Authority's plan to pump water from the Snake Valley Aquifer (part of which underlies the Goshute Reservation) to Las Vegas. Have them report their findings either in-class or in a research paper.

Assessment Plan

Debate resources chosen

Debate participation

[End of Unit Assessment](#)

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The University of Utah's [American West Center](#) (AWC) produced the curriculum materials in

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