

COAST MIWOK TRIBAL COUNCIL OF MARIN

June 3, 2021

Secretary Deb Haaland
U.S. Department of the Interior
849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

As the Coast Miwok Tribal Council, lineal descendants of the original people who inhabited the land that is now called Point Reyes National Seashore, we respectfully ask you to review and reject a travesty currently occurring at Point Reyes National Seashore that perpetuates a long legacy of harm inflicted on Native People by the National Park Service.

In 2008, Park officials submitted a proposal to add an Indigenous Archeological District at the Seashore to the National Historic Register. Their submission was based on more than a decade of study by Sonoma State University researchers, who meticulously documented more than 150 Indigenous Coast Miwok sites, including villages, food-processing camps, rock shelters, house pits, hunting blinds and stone tool remnants dating back thousands of years throughout the 71,000-acre National Seashore.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, in 2015, without explanation, the Park Service withdrew their Indigenous proposal and replaced it with an application for a Historic Dairy Ranching District. While the 2008 application had been allowed to languish - we believe due to pressure from politically influential ranchers who directly benefited from being in the Seashore, supported by local and federal politicians - the Dairy Ranch proposal was rapidly approved.

This designation has subsequently been used by Park officials to justify continuing ranching operations that are harming the archeological sites previously identified (as well as potentially yet-undiscovered sites) and inflicting continuing environmental damage on both the land and endangered native wildlife [1].

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Specifically, the current draft management plan:

- Elevates 150-year-old ranching history over the documented, 10,000+ year Miwok history on the land now called Point Reyes National Seashore. While these immigrant families prospered on what had been Native land, disenfranchised Coast Miwok people were left to cope with the intergenerational trauma of the systemic murder by California authorities of thousands of their people, forced conscription as laborers, and other hateful policies, including separating children from their parents.
- Provides a handful of ranches with 20-year leases over 17,000 acres of Park lands, permitting continued desecration of native sites by 5,500 cows and farming equipment.
- Allows policies to accommodate ranchers that harm native wildlife, water, and habitat.
- Includes the systematic killing of indigenous Tule elk, once thought to be extinct, whose successful reintroduction to the park in 1972 has been hailed as a significant achievement.

In light of these concerns, we ask you to please:

- Reinstate the National Historic Register proposal for an Indigenous Archeological District at Point Reyes National Seashore.
- Reject the management plan for the Point Reyes National Seashore proposed by Park officials.
- Instruct the Park Service to develop a plan that allows for Indigenous stewardship of this irreplaceable archeological site and honors the original Native people, lands, and wildlife of Point Reyes National Seashore.

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We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Coast Miwok Tribal Council of Marin

DocuSigned by:

Joseph Sanchez

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Joseph Sanchez, Tribal Elder and Hoipu, Rancho Nicasio

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Jason Deschler, Dance Captain and Headman, Sah-tah-ko

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[1] <https://seaturtles.org/national-park-service-terminated-coast-miwok-archeological-protection-plan-in-favor-of-subsidizing-private-ranching-at-a-national-seashore/>