

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To whom it may concern:

It has come to our attention that the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation have been denied federal recognition as a distinct tribe. As Mariposa residents, we want it to be known that we fully recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct tribal Nation and are in full support of their petition for federal recognition.


We have been long-time residents of Mariposa (since 2001). Our children have gone to school with Southern Sierra Miwuk friends, learned about their tribal history in the area through volunteer work at the Mariposa History Museum, and attended the local Pow wow hosted by the American Indian Council of Mariposa, where their Southern Sierra Miwuk friends were dancers.

We love living near Yosemite National Park, and yet were dismayed to learn of the history of violence by state-funded militias like the Mariposa Battalion in the 1850s and the non-ratification of sovereign nation-to-nation treaties in the same era. Given the history of California genocide and removal of Indigenous peoples into the late 1800s, and then assimilation policies into the late 1900s, it is a wonder that tribal Nations like the Southern Sierra Miwuk even survive today and have been able to keep their cultural identity alive!

As Mariposa residents, we have been amazed to witness their local efforts to revitalize language, teach their young people, and take care of their elders. We believe that federal recognition would not only benefit the Southern Sierra Miwuk community, but also would benefit their neighbors like us. When Indigenous communities are strengthened and uplifted, the whole community is strengthened. They are our link to an unbroken chain of people who lived on this land we love, and represent a vital history to be protected, shared, and continued for generations to come. We believe we have a lot to learn from their ways of living in greater balance with our local ecosystems and from their language and cultural traditions.

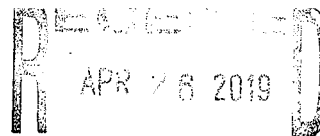
We ask that you please reconsider your refusal to recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct community. We will continue to see them as such.

With all due respect,



Gary and Debbie Friesen and family





BY: \_\_\_\_\_

April 23, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Vicente Diaz. I am a member of the Hualapai Tribe and descendant of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and Oglala Sioux Tribe. I am writing this letter to express concern of Federal Recognition of Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSM) needs to be federally recognized as an Indian Nation. The SSM people have maintained a presence in Yosemite National Park and surrounding aboriginal territories for time immemorial. My ancestors, the Washoe people, have recognized and traded with the Southern Sierra Miwuk long before the establishment of the United States and the State of California. My people would travel to visit and trade goods, such as pine nuts, acorns, salt, roots, and game for the benefit for our communities. It concerns me when the federal government, and more specifically the National Parks Service and other agencies, seek to strengthen tribal relations but lack knowledge, acknowledgment, and recognition of the SSM people and the land they reside. The Office of Federal Acknowledgement and National Park Service needs to recognize the importance of SSM people petition to maintain their space. If NPS states that their intentions are to improve tribal relations they should first start by advocating for such recognition. To my understanding gathering permits are given to federally recognized tribes. This does not apply to SSM people due to their status as an Indian Nation. The SSM people are not able to access their traditional cultural resources because of the recognition process system and pedigree of Indian status the federal government has placed on Indian people. The OFA should understand that SSM people have been accessing these spaces since their creation and should continue to do so. My people, Hualapai, Washoe, and Oglala Lakota have also experience exclusion, appropriations of lands and desecration of sacred sites from the National Park Service, Nation Forrest Service, and Bureau of Land Management. It troubles me when agencies such as the OFA, NPS, and other agencies manage ancestral territories of Indian tribes and exclude them. I write to you as a citizen with public interest, as a Washoe descendant with relations to the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, and as an Indian tribal member whose wants to bring attention to the importance of this matter.

Sincerely,

Vicente Diaz



RECEIVED  
MAY - 2 2019  
BY \_\_\_\_\_

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the Southern Sierra Miwuk (SSM) Nation and their application for federal recognition. I am a pastor and educator who grew up in Mariposa, CA and frequented Yosemite National Park. My family and I recognize the SSM as a distinct tribal community. Their distinct community is well known in our local Mariposa community, and also in Yosemite National Park. I believe that federal recognition offers the SSM and the U.S. government an opportunity for justice after many years of denial of the rights of the SSM.

Recognition will serve not only the SSM but also Yosemite National Park as a whole and our local ecosystems. Federal recognition would allow the land management practices of the SSM to be seen as valuable assets for the survival of intricate Yosemite ecosystems that co-evolved with the ancestors of the SSM over thousands of years. It is unconscionable that the SSM – whose elders were born in Yosemite Valley – are not allowed to even apply for a permit to gather plants and medicines from their traditional homelands, since they are not federally recognized.

Along with members of my Christian faith tradition in the Mennonite Church, I have been undergoing a process of study and lament over the Doctrine of Discovery, the underlying Western legal framework that justified Indigenous land dispossession, removal and destruction of Indigenous ways of life around the world. I currently teach a course for seminary students following the Potawatomi Trail of Death under the 1830 Indian Removal Act. Students draw connections between the government's forced removal of Indigenous Peoples in the 1800s and the continuation of the Doctrine of Discovery today, shown in the cases that disregard Indigenous land rights and in the ongoing failure to recognize Indigenous nations like the SSM as sovereign nations deserving of respect and resources. The OFA has only acknowledged one California tribe in the last 40 years (the Death Valley Timbisha Shoshone), evidence of either a broken system or one that is functioning extremely well to deny tribal communities their rights.

We can't change history, but we can act for change in the present. I appeal to you to act for justice and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a distinct nation.

With all due respect for the power we have vested in you as citizens,



Katerina Friesen  
Pastor, Adjunct Instructor  
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary



May 17, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: Petitioner # 82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Patricia Parker. I am writing this letter to you concerning the Federal Recognition of Petitioner # 82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA.

In 1974, I married into a family who are members of the petitioning tribe, Southern Sierra Miwuk (SSM) of Yosemite Valley/Mariposa. Of course I spent hours on end in the Indian Cultural Museum learning more about my new family. My children and I sat with my mother-in-law in the Indian Gardens everyday as she wove baskets for the tourists visiting Yosemite, listening to her interpret the history of the Miwuks/Paiutes who lived there long before John Muir set eyes on it. From the time of John Muir forward, there is a long legacy of physical artifacts, written documentation, and pictorial evidence of Native presence in the valley. There are dozens of books written on the subject. There is an abundance of documentation of Native presence that the federal government and the National Park Service use at their discretion to attract tourists to the area, bringing in countless dollars to the federal government. Certainly the federal government and the National Park Service cannot deny that this tribe, the Southern Sierra Miwuk, did in fact inhabit Yosemite Valley.

It is my understanding that the Southern Sierra Miwuk tribe is being denied federal recognition due to not continually inhabiting Yosemite Valley and the said lack of exhibiting continuous presence as a distinct Indigenous cultural community residing in the Yosemite/Mariposa land base area. Anyone that is familiar with traditional tribal behavior knows that trading with surrounding tribes is part and parcel to survival. So it makes sense that the tribe would travel to trade with other surrounding Native groups, integrate and intermarry with each other. But they always returned home to Yosemite. There are only two other instances that these Indians left for other than traditional tribal trading. The first instance was the forceful gathering up and removal of the entire group to Fresno during the Mariposa Indian Wars. But that didn't stop these Indians from returning to their beloved Yosemite. These Indians continuously slipped away from this detention center and ran home to Yosemite Valley, to the point that the federal government finally allowed them to stay and set up an Indian Village just west of the current Camp 4. The second instance of forceful removal was the National Park Service destroying the Indian Village in a fire drill in 1969, forcing the Native families to either relocate to Mariposa or surrounding areas or giving them government housing with the other employees, depending on their employment status with the government. That left just a handful of SSM families in Yosemite Valley, one of which was mine.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk tribe of Yosemite Valley is not asking for much. They are just asking for federal recognition as a tribe to have the right to gather and maintain a presence in Yosemite Valley for the purpose of traditional cultural practices. The federal government and the National Park Service have the unique opportunity to do the right thing here and allow the Southern Sierra Miwuk sovereign access to their homeland. To continue to deny their petition based on the false premise that this Native American tribe did not continuously live in Yosemite Valley and were not continuously present there defies logic, and more importantly, the documented history of Yosemite Valley and its Native peoples.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Parker  
Mother/Educator/Teacher/Scholar  
3701 W. Ellery  
Fresno, CA 93711





May 20, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Subject: Petitioner # 82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition**

To the Respected Officials of the U.S. Office of Federal Acknowledgement -

My name is Tišina Ta-till-ium Parker. I am a member of the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation** of Mariposa/Yosemite and a descendant of legendary basket maker Lucy Telles and the grand daughter of Ralph and Julia Parker. The lineage of my ancestors is of **Southern Sierra Miwuk**, Mono Lake Paiute & Kashia Pomo Tribes. Like many Indigenous contemporary Natives, I have mixed tribal blood, yet by birth have ties to the sacred traditional land of Yosemite & Mariposa. My tribal affiliation is strongly identified as **Southern Sierra Miwuk**.

I was born just outside of Yosemite in the foothills of Mariposa, CA. I have been connected and participating as an active tribal member in cultural gatherings and activities of my tribe, **Southern Sierra Miwuk** since I was born. My first memories are of sitting by my Grandmother Julia's side entranced with her, asking questions of learning basket weaving. I was raised going to ceremony in the Yosemite roundhouse, memories of Miwuk dancers dressed in feather capes and buckskin silhouetted against the flickering flames of the fire. I would often fall asleep on the sacred earthen ground inside the roundhouse and awaken to smoke snaking through the purple skies of the breaking daylight illuminated through the center of the roundhouse that faced up toward the sky, the towering granite rocks and majestic Yosemite falls above. As a young girl I learned to bead collars and intricate beadwork in the **SSM** tribal office cultural craft programs. For decades I have walked the mountains of Yosemite through the Sierras on the trails of my ancestors, walking in sync with my **Southern Sierra Miwuk** cousins, aunties, uncles, elders on our annual "Traditional Walk" which is a cultural journey that brings tribal members back to our sacred homeland. With my family, my Grandfather Ralph Parker, a direct descendant of the territory claimed as traditional land of **Southern Sierra Miwuk**, and my Grandmother Julia Parker who married into this tribal community, my family has been residing in our ancestral territory and actively creating/participating in the **SSM** tribal community our entire lives.

The **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation**, through generations of inter-tribal basket weavers, cultural carriers, craft people, spiritual leaders, community organizers, is one of most prolifically known Indigenous tribal groups of California. Before the founding of Yosemite as a National Park in 1890, my ancestors have been acknowledged as Indigenous people to the Yosemite/Mariposa and wider reaching areas. As generations passed, tribelets have intermarried and intermingled and formed the banded unified group today known as the **Southern Sierra Miwuk**. Our tribal legacy as people Indigenous to this territory is widely documented throughout history. Pictures, artifacts, stories of my family and ancestors are used as cultural attractions at the Yosemite Indian Museum operated by the US Federal Government. This museum visited by millions of visitors per year tells the story of our ancestors, our connection to our tribal homeland, and historically documents interactions with the US Government. Current tribal members, crafts people, community leaders and spiritual leaders have been interacting here with tourists since the first days the museum came into existence. Documented proof of my **SSM** ancestors, tribal leaders and community exists throughout the well recorded history of the European settlement of the Yosemite/Mariposa and surrounding areas. To deny that our tribal group, **Southern Sierra Miwuk** did not and has not continuously existed as a distinct tribal community tied to the land in question is a blatant distortion of the truth.

As a distinct cultural group Indigenous to the Yosemite/Mariposa and surrounding areas, the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation** has carried on our cultural, spiritual and community practices since before European Settlers first happened upon our tribal territory. Since the re-creation of our roundhouse in Yosemite, **Southern Sierra Miwuks** have been holding and hosting cultural Bear Dance healing ceremonies and round house dances that bring other California tribal communities to our traditional homeland of Yosemite. The ceremonial use of our roundhouse, which was re-established in the 1970's under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, gave back our rights to practice traditional ceremony on our sacred homeland. Since then our Yosemite roundhouse has been a consistently used as a ceremonial gathering and worshiping location for thousands of people in the wider California American Indian community and continues to be a vibrant cultural hub for contemporary Indigenous spiritual practices. It could be said that our prolifically active roundhouse and ceremonial practices helped revive ceremonies in other Indigenous communities throughout the entire state who had lost their ceremonies prior to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Today the SSM Yosemite roundhouse continues to be an active location for California native ceremony and the building of our new roundhouse on the site of Wahhoga in Yosemite is an example of the thriving, contemporary cultural and spiritual community of the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation**.

Since the beginning of colonial contact **Southern Sierra Miwuk** people have been culturally relevant and a notable, distinct Indigenous community of California. Today our tribal people, though many of us live in poverty due to lack of profitable work opportunities, poor access to higher education/job training, homelessness/no access to landbase, racist policies against our people, etc., we continue to practice our cultural ways on the very same land our ancestors have resided for thousands of years. Throughout the decades **SSM** people have been creating positive relationship with the land gathering traditional medicinal cultural wild foods and plants, basket materials and telling the ancient stories of our people. We have supported our Indigenous **SSM** tribal community with opportunities to scholarship funds through our non-profit the American Indian Council of Mariposa County. We have consistently hosted cultural events throughout the years such as BIG TIME in Yosemite, a ceremonial and celebratory gathering of our people open to the public, the Mariposa Powwow, hundreds of Bear Dance ceremonies in our Yosemite roundhouse, our annual cultural Walk over the Sierras, taught traditional craft and basket classes to our youth, held ceremonial sweats and hosted many, many more cultural gatherings. In the generations before and in our contemporary tribal community, there is no doubt that the **SSM** have continued to be a distinct tribal group Indigenous to the Yosemite/Mariposa area, our cultural activities and long documented history show this fact.

As an Indigenous person, descendant of the original people of the sacred land of Yosemite/Mariposa and a member of the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation** I urge the Office of Federal Acknowledgment and the Office of Interior of the U.S. Government to do what is right and grant Tribal Recognition to the people of the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation**. To deny this rightful acknowledgement would be a horrific shame of the American people and would effectively deny cultural personhood, and erase the acknowledged history and important cultural impact that the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation** has made on the historical and contemporary fabric of Native America and our country as a whole. As public servants to our Nation, law makers, educated historians, ethnographers, genealogists, anthropologists, this is your time to act in retribution to an entire Indigenous community who has survived the genocide that has marred the creation of this country. This is your chance to right what has been wronged and acknowledge that the people of the **Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation** have and do exist as a legitimate tribal community Indigenous to one of the most celebrated and visited locations on our beloved Earth. **Grant the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation U.S. Federal Recognition status.**

Respectfully submitted,



*Tishina Ta-till-ium Parker*

**Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation - Member**

[www.southernsierramiwuknation.org](http://www.southernsierramiwuknation.org)

May 20, 2019

Janaki J. Patel  
5551 Foresta Rd  
El Portal, CA 95318

Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs,

I am submitting this comment in response to the Proposed Finding against Federal acknowledgement of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSMN) of California, Petitioner #82.

I have lived and worked for much of the past 13 years on the ancestral lands of the Southern Sierra Miwuk in Yosemite National Park, employed by a nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, Naturebridge, as a naturalist and environmental educator for youth. In my time here, it has become clear to me that the SSMN has had, and continues to have, a strong presence and sense of community in their ancestral lands, despite the injustices they have endured since the time of the California government-sponsored militia violence in this region.

My position as an educator has allowed me to connect with several members of the SSMN community who serve as Park Rangers in the Division of Interpretation, which has further allowed me to facilitate for my students a greater understanding of the land they are visiting, the SSMN, their history and their presence. Most of my students, like myself, identify as non-native, yet upon learning the history of the land they are on and the current status of the Southern Sierra Miwuk community, they become keenly aware of the illogic of the denial of their Federal recognition. We wonder: how is it that the National Park Service can have on display in the Indian Museum of Yosemite Valley, exquisite basketry and other cultural materials created and sourced by Southern Sierra Miwuk people who were born, lived and worked on that very land, and yet the SSMN now cannot have the Federal recognition that would allow permits for those same families to harvest and gather those same materials that are necessary for supporting their physical and cultural health?

I ask that the justice of Federal acknowledgement be granted for this community who, for generations long before the establishment of the National Park Service, have stewarded this land which now gives inspiration to millions of visitors annually. It is time that the Office of Federal Acknowledgement give the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation their due recognition.

Respectfully,  
Janaki J. Patel



May 21, 2019

Jill Harry  
5585 Bear Creek Drive  
Catheys Valley, CA 95306

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

To whom it may concern:

It is long past time to federally recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82), the descendants of the Southern Sierra Miwuk people who had villages in the areas now known as Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, and its immediate vicinity. As you know, they have been seeking this acknowledgement since 1982.

Surely, the many scholarly reports and supporting historical, anthropological and genealogical information submitted to the Interior Office of Federal Acknowledgment, plus the independent research conducted by the OFA, all establishing the connection between the Tribe and the historical Southern Sierra Miwuk who signed treaties with the United States in 1851-52, is enough to grant the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation the recognition they request.

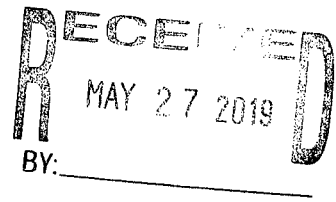
As a resident of Mariposa County, I value my Southern Sierra Miwuk neighbors and appreciate the history and culture they so generously share. It is a shame the federal government has not yet done the same. This needs to be corrected.

The designation the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation is seeking will allow them to acquire tribal sovereignty rights. Federal recognition grants their people access to further health benefits, scholarships for higher education, funding opportunities to support their well-being and cultural continuance. Please, do the right thing and give them the federal recognition they have long deserved.

Sincerely,

Jill Harry





May 21, 2019

Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

On behalf of CASA of Mariposa County, I am honored to write a letter in support of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation in their petition for Federal Acknowledgement.

CASA of Mariposa County serves children and families who are in the foster care system in Mariposa County. We provide volunteers who advocate for children to be in a safe, loving and permanent home as quickly as possible. Federal Acknowledgement of the Southern Sierra Miwuk, would mean that children of this tribe would be granted ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) status in the courtroom in dependency cases. Without federal recognition, the children who come into the foster care system who are Miwuk are not granted ICWA status.

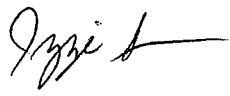
Without ICWA status, the culture and community of these children is often in jeopardy or ignored. Culturally sensitive services for the family are no guaranteed; tribal customary adoptions are not available; and foster home placement options are restricted to the small number of foster homes we have in the county.

Although we are a rural county with a small population, the Southern Sierra Miwuk are the second largest ethnicity in Mariposa County. Therefore, Federal Recognition of this large and active tribe would open up numerous culturally appropriate foster home placement options, as well as the potential for adoption into these homes.

When a child is removed from their home and placed into foster care they lose everything. It is absolutely essential that their culture is maintained, or this too will add to the trauma that the system is trying to stop.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk are a flourishing, active tribe both in Mariposa and Yosemite. Members of this tribe hold positions in the Board of Supervisors, are owners of local businesses, hold leadership positions in local for-profit and non-profit entities, and are community leaders. In every classroom in Mariposa County there are children who are members of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. It is an honor to have grown up in Mariposa County and now work for CASA of Mariposa County. I grew up knowing the history of this land and knowing that the grinding stones in our back yards were made by the ancestors of the South Sierra Miwuk children whom I went to school with. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation is overdue for Federal Acknowledgement and it is hurting the families and children we serve. Please grant them recognition.

Sincerely,

  
Izzi Stalder  
CASA Program Coordinator  
Alliance for Community Transformations  
209-742-4206





RECEIVED  
JUL 14 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Nicholas Frank Ross-Rhudy  
P.O. Box 295  
El Portal, CA 95318

May 21, 2019

Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is in comment to the *Proposed Finding against Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation*, of November 16, 2018. I am writing to strongly encourage the Office of Indian Affairs to withdraw the Proposed Finding in order to recommence the period of Active Consideration of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation petition under the standard for unambiguous previous federal acknowledgement. I am certain that upon careful review and reconsideration, the Office of Indian Affairs will find that the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation's petition for Federal Acknowledgment is legitimate and deserving of approval.

I am a resident of the local area that is home to the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation. I was born in Mariposa, California, and raised in El Portal, California—an area that is part of the traditional homeland of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation. For the past 13 years I have worked in Yosemite National Park as an employee of the National Park Service. Throughout my life I have known many people who are the descendants of the historical Southern Sierra Miwok Tribe, and have had the great honor and privilege to accompany members of the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation in some of their traditional ceremonies, including the Bear Dance and the Spiritual Walk in Yosemite National Park. As a member of the local community it is unmistakable that there is a clear continuity between the historical Southern Sierra Miwok Tribe and the present-day Southern Sierra Miwok Nation, that has not been broken in spite of the traumatic experience of colonization and the need to adapt to the many changes that were its result. In the face of great historical change, the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation has not lost its identity, traditional values and teachings, or sense of place. This fact has been extensively documented by National Park Service anthropologists over the course of many years.

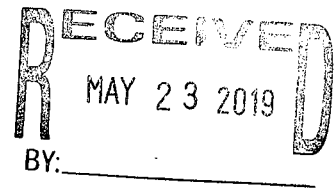
The Southern Sierra Miwok Nation, like many other American Indian peoples in California and across the United States, has suffered untold wrongs due to the ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstandings that tainted the historical period during which their homelands were taken from them and they were forced to begin their fight for survival as a people. The Office of Indian Affairs now has an opportunity to take a step in the direction of righting some of those wrongs by fairly considering the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation's petition. I urge you to make the right decision.

Respectfully,



Nicholas Frank Ross-Rhudy





Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior

RE: Petition Number 082, Proposed Findings – Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

Greetings,

My name is Rick Quesnot and I am writing in regard to a petition submitted by the southern Sierra Miwok Nation. The proposed findings demonstrate a clear lack of support for and understanding of what a community can go through over decades of time. The evolution of a state registered organizing body should only serve to show what the people felt they needed for their community at a given time (AICMC, SSM). The bureaucratic red tape process that people need to go through in order to get federally recognized status requires the people to get into the mindset of bureaucrats who do the job for a living day in and day out. Instead of approaching the matter with the mindset of understanding how a community develops and evolves, it seems a bureaucratic approach of attempting to seek out fraudulent activity with changing of names.

The matter of a spread-out membership with high numbers should be acknowledged as a positive. Being a descendant of a given area doesn't require someone to live there for their entire life or require future generations to do so. Furthermore, it is absurd to expect that roll would be taken at every given event, gathering, or act of goodwill. Who takes roll at a birthday party? On the occasion I have visited Christian churches I have never been asked to sign in. Additionally, many tribes have gone through various diasporas that were both created by and maintained by great difficulties rooted in the colonization and genocide of their lands and ancestors. This has resulted in people moving away from their ancestral lands in order to get by. The proposed findings seem to make it sound as if a distinct community involves someone being able to walk across the street and ask to borrow some sugar. People can actually be very spread out even in just the Yosemite and Mariposa County area.



A distinct community doesn't mean that every single member or even a majority will show up to each event sponsored and organized by the legally registered organization. A real community involves families who obviously have their own lives to live and manage. They may not go to every single event but they know that they can go and are welcome. They may go to some events one year and then not go to events for multiple years while still seeing other families in the membership on their own time outside of the events, without signing a legal document saying so, or even taking pictures. Indeed, the proposed findings seem to list everything that makes the SSM a distinct community while using an absurd and vague definition that is head achingly ethnocentric in nature.

To the matter of the activity of the community, I can testify myself that I was privileged to have participated in some of their events. In 2009 I attended the Pow Wow they held. It was beautiful to see a gathering of their people as well as them opening it up to the public. I also supported in a peaceful demonstration in the Yosemite Park valley decrying the abuse of SSM peoples on the part of the federal government. It was a peaceful demonstration involving prayer. In the years since I have also participated in their traditional ceremonies such as a Big Time ceremony, as well as a Bear Ceremony.

I move that this bureaucratic entity re-examine and overturn its findings of the criterion of a distinct community as well as the requirements for documenting community activity. The current proposed findings are a detriment to the self-determination of the SSM people. The bigger questions of documentation seem to be, why has it taken nearly 40 years to come up with these proposed findings? What timeline, if any, is the government held to? Why are the SSM being required to provide documentation running 30 years after their application? Where is the accountability in this matter? And how are the SSM given any relief?

Thank you for your time,



Rick Quesnot



To: Department of Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement

From Robert Stanley Rust  
Subject:  
Letter of support Petitioner #82  
Southern Miwok Nation.

Hello I am Robert Rust writing you this letter in support of my people.

A little history on myself my father James Calvin Rust born in 1904 died in 1999 California roll number 55519 his mother Grace Hinks daughter of Maria Labrado Ydrte Daughter of Chief Tenya of the Yosemite Indians (Awhaneechi). So I'm just a few generations removed from Yosemite. Which I still call home regardless where I lay my head.

In Yosemite's visitor center you can hear my great grandmother's story of how soldiers came and burned the village. Then there are the pictures of her and my grandmother making baskets and manzanita cider in the cultural area. When I was a young boy in Yosemite Valley I remember in helping (Playing) in the rafters of the round house and umacha's (Bark houses) and the sweat lodge. That was around 1975. We still use these Dwellings today for ceremonies. And with any luck and work schedule I will be afforded the opportunity to help rebuild the old village (wahhoga).

Since leaving home in Midpines California (in Mariposa county) to go into the U.S. Navy from 1986-1995 I would still find a way to participate in our ceremonies when home on leave. Most of these ceremonies dates and time are like our language, Traditions, history, and folk lore are by word of mouth and are alive and well today.

Today my biggest task is teaching my six children our customs and our way and language. Being an aircraft mechanic on aerial fire fighting aircraft this can be a challenge with fire seasons getting longer every year but still find time to make ceremonies whether in Mariposa or in Toulumne California. Because Miwok is not where you are, it's who you are.

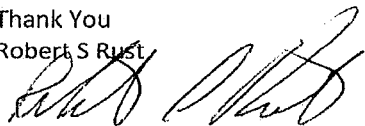
So on this subject of tribal recognition even though we have blended into today's society we are still here and thriving. Having the benefits of tribal recognition to help the elders of our community and the children which is our future is so important to me.

So how can you not recognize someone the United States had a war with (Mariposa Indian War)? Do we not recognize Iraq, Germany, Viet Nam, North Korea?

Or how can you not recognize a people that had an influence on a state's history? Or nations history by having president's and queens visit our home land and talk of the beauty of the land and it's people. Still today we are having an influence on our state and nation by who we are and what we do.

So in closing I'm attaching reports from LT. Tredwell Moore pacific division on the Mariposa Indian war. From the national park service site on Yosemite Indians, the surviving communities of which several are recognized along with a little piece on my Great Grandmother Which the park service recognizes. Copy of fathers California Indian roll number.

Thank You  
Robert S Rust







RECEIVED  
AUG 18 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Candy O'Donel-Browne  
PO Box 576, 628 Rancheria Creek Road  
Midpines, California. 95345

August 14, 2019

Bill Leonard, Tribal Chairman  
American Indian Council of Mariposa County  
PO Box 186  
Mariposa, CA 95338

Dear Bill:

It is my understanding that the American Indian Council of Mariposa County has submitted a petition for tribal acknowledgement of to:

The Honorable Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior, Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Enclosed please find a copy of my letter to her office endorsing the request for Petitioner #082: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA, P.O. Box 186, Mariposa, CA 95338.

Never give up!

Sincerely,



Candy O'Donel-Browne

AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL  
1849 C STREET, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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AUG 18 2019

BY: RECEIVED  
AUG 18 20..  
BY:

Candy O'Donel-Browne  
PO Box 576, 628 Rancheria Creek Road  
Midpines, California. 95345

The Honorable Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior, Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California.

Dear Ms. Sweeney:

Less than 170 years ago, Midpines and the surrounding area supported a nation of Miwuk people. They shared adequate resources to live here comfortably for thousands of years.

I've been told that they called the hill I live on Sunny Knoll. From my house, I look up at Labrado Mountain, so named after Maria Labrado, granddaughter of Chief Tenaya of Yosemite Valley. Her family was cast out of Yosemite for the first time in 1851 by Major James Savage. I overlook the Sarah Priest Allotment at the foot of Labrado Mountain, which is administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I pass the Miwuk cemetery whenever I drive to town. For sure, I am reminded every day that I live in Indian territory.

So how did I get here? My own ancestors were European immigrants.

In the 1850's, the native lands of Midpines were suddenly overrun by an influx of forty-niners. (My property abuts a registered gold mine.) The concept of land ownership shifted during the Gold Rush; it was Europeanized. Within a few years, it became illegal for native people to live off land officially taken over by foreign invaders.

Over the years, Miwuk families have had to work out how to survive without much support in an alien world. Broken treaties have created distrust. Territory held by Miwuk tribal members has been confiscated bit by bit. Deprived of their ancestral homeland, some tribal members have been forced to scatter. Race-based hostility and prejudicial injustice have eroded Miwuk self esteem for generations. This has taken an overwhelming emotional toll on a cohesive nation and the individuals within it.

However—despite being starved, murdered, displaced and disregarded, and having no centralized territory to call their own—our local Miwok tribe has continued to maintain a strong identity. They know who they are. And those of us who live on what was once their land acknowledge their traditions and history.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation is eager to win federal recognition, which will provide them with the dignity and status they deserve. As their neighbor, I strongly believe that we, the people who overran their country, owe them at least that much. I feel uncomfortable seeing that a proposed finding against acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation as an Indian tribe is being considered by my government. For the sake of justice, please reconsider before it becomes final.

Respectfully,

  
Candy O'Donel-Browne

cc: Petitioner #082: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA, P.O. Box 186, Mariposa, CA 95338



9/28/2019

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After thirty years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the single vague and subjective criteria that the Nation does not constitute a “community.” The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting this “community” criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s’ birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Indian friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a “community.”

It should go without saying, but most birthday parties and baby showers and graduations do not take attendance lists in most communities, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. I also would like to point out the definitions of “community” used in the Proposed Finding are strongly biased toward Anglo-centric community happenings, such as birthday parties, baby showers, and graduations, which in and of itself is problematic when considering what constitutes a “community” in the distinct cultures of SSMN and other indigenous nations.

I grew up near the territory of the SSMN, in Lee Vining, California on the eastern side of Yosemite, and have interacted with many members of the Nation, who have always made clear their strong identity as members of SSMN and communicated a clear connection to their SSMN community. I attended college at the University of Santa Cruz with two SSMN members who also communicated a strong community connection and identity with the SSMN. Needless to say these friends of mine were attending university and could not always be home to attend SSMN events. I feel this is relevant to the Proposed Finding’s argument that not all SSMN members regularly attended events—clearly in many cases in this community, and any community, not all members can be there in person all the time, but this does not mean a community does not exist or that members (such as those away at college) need to attend official events in-person to be part of the community.

Finally, the argument that non-Indian members attending SSMN events undermines their status as a “community” is saddening. The generosity and openness of SSMN members that I know toward non-Indians has always impressed me. Inviting non-Indian members to observe or participate in SSMN events such as the traditional walk across the Sierra from Yosemite to Mono Lake should be seen as a commendable step toward education of the non-Indian community and an important way to unite Indian and non-Indian communities in acknowledging

and healing historic conflict and trauma. Likewise, the SSMN's openness toward other tribes, such as jointly doing the traditional walk with the Mono Lake Paiute, should not be seen as a lack of "community" but rather as a sign of a strong community that interacts and has relationships with other local communities.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. I focus here on the technicalities of the Proposed Finding's ruling, but the historical and contemporary background of this issue should speak for itself—the SSMN is a clearly documented indigenous Nation that has persevered as a strong self-governing community through centuries of colonization, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government's renegeing on its treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Carle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R".

Ryan Carle  
370 Peeler Lake Drive,  
Lee Vining, CA 93451

**REFERENCE Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA.**

*To the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs*

*Department of Interior/ Office of Federal Acknowledgment*

My name is Kat Anderson. I am a Research Associate in the Department of Plant Sciences at UC Davis and recently retired from the USDA. I have worked for many years with tribes in California, particularly those in the Sierra Nevada bioregion, documenting their detailed knowledge of plant uses and the practices they used to manage the pre-historical and historical forests, woodlands, and grasslands.

The first tribe that I worked with was the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation of the Yosemite region. I was invited up to Yosemite National Park by Yosemite National Park staff and encouraged to work with the tribe of the region—the Southern Sierra Miwuk at the Masters and Ph.D. level. The funding for my research in part came from the federal government. There was no question as to the Southern Sierra Miwuk’s authenticity as a tribe. I worked with many individuals, impressed by the fact that many members of the tribe still lived in the region. I am very grateful for the elders’ vast knowledge and encouragement. Tribal members generously took me to many areas of Yosemite Valley and other parts of the park, showing me the plants used for foods, medicines, and technologies of their ancestors and still gathered by them. They showed me meaningful geographic areas such as old village sites, processing sites, and sacred areas—recounting activities, stories, legends, and ceremonies of the tribe attached to place—a familiarity and love for the area that I fondly recall to the present day. But what moved me the most, was the great care that their ancestors took through indigenous burning, pruning, tillage, knocking, seed beating, and hand weeding in various areas of Yosemite National Park, making it worthy of national park status. Galen Clark, guardian of the Yosemite Grant, also documented these practices, as he lived among the Southern Sierra Miwuk people for many years.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk were instrumental in laying the foundation for the book that I later wrote and published with the University of California Press, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California’s Natural Resources*. Among my research methods in addition to many interviews, was to read hundreds of unpublished and published documents, books, articles, and reports pertaining to the culture and history of the Southern Sierra Miwuk people spanning many years.

I am writing you today because I recently found out about the federal Proposed Finding against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation issued on November 16, 2018. When I first started working with the tribe in 1986, they were hopeful that their petition for recognition, filed in 1982, would be granted. They were positive about getting some of their beloved land back. They waited patiently, addressing every inadequacy in the petition over many years. Many of the elders that I worked with then have since died, never having seen their petition granted.

In the 1980s and 1990s I attended American Indian Council of Mariposa County Council meetings, the formal governing body of the tribe. After many years of interviews, and very in-depth scholarly research, there was no question that this body and tribal members were the direct descendants of the historical tribe and formed a distinct community. It is with great sadness that I recount meeting with Chairman Nick Brocchini in 1987, at that time so hopeful that Federal Recognition would come to pass, yet he never got to see the fulfillment of his most cherished dream.

As you know, the world in which countless generations of their ancestors lived was swept away with the coming of Euro-Americans and gold mining. Everything that the Southern Sierra Miwuk depended on and held sacred was challenged, destroyed, or taken, leaving them disenfranchised. The Proposed Finding is one more injustice piled on top of a long line of social and political injustices.

Other national parks in the Far West—such as Olympic National Park, Mt. Rainier National Park, Crater National Park, Redwood National Park, and Death Valley National Park—are managed with the active engagement of Federally Recognized Tribes—why not Yosemite?

I love Yosemite National Park, and so I have to ask myself: Who loved the land first? Who took care of it for centuries before my ancestors came here? A final report to Yosemite Fund in 2008, entitled “Status and Trends of Black Oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) Populations and Recruitment in Yosemite Valley” authored by two National Park Service ecologists, Bill Kuhn and Brent Johnson, concludes that Yosemite Valley is a *cultural landscape*. The millions of tourists who come to Yosemite Valley each year, and are moved by the tremendous vistas, the spectacular waterfalls, the black oak groves, and open meadows, have no idea that what they cherish is in part the result of centuries of Southern Sierra Miwuk care. These features are part of a cultural landscape that began to change when the Southern Sierra Miwuk could no longer burn the meadows, hand weed the cottonwoods, burn in the mixed conifer forests and oak groves, knock and prune the oaks, and practice the other management techniques that give Yosemite Valley its unsurpassed beauty.

I object to your recent ruling and ask that your Department reverse the current finding and issue a new Proposed Finding finally granting Federal Acknowledgment for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation that they so rightfully deserve after all these years.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss these comments in more depth.

Very sincerely yours,

M. Kat Anderson, Ph.D.  
Dept. of Plant Sciences  
One Shields Ave., Mail Stop 6  
University of California, Davis  
(530) 902-7182



10/10/2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After thirty years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the single vague and subjective criteria that the Nation does not constitute a “community.” The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting this “community” criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s’ birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Indian friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a “community.”

It should go without saying, but most birthday parties and baby showers and graduations do not take attendance lists in most communities, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. I also would like to point out the definitions of “community” used in the Proposed Finding are strongly biased toward Anglo-centric community happenings, such as birthday parties, baby showers, and graduations, which in and of itself is problematic when considering what constitutes a “community” in the distinct cultures of SSMN and other indigenous nations.

I worked in Yosemite National Park, the territory of the SSMN, for 5 years and have interacted with many members of the Nation, who have always made clear their strong identity as members of SSMN and communicated a clear connection to their SSMN community. Friends from the SSMN have made clear their commitment to their culture and family and they make an effort to be home whenever possible for tribal events. This is not always possible but I don’t think anyone of any culture is always able to attend family gatherings. I feel this is relevant to the Proposed Finding’s argument that not all SSMN members regularly attended events—clearly in many cases in this community, and any community, not all members can be there in person all the time, but this does not mean a community does not exist or that members (such as those away at college) need to attend official events in-person to be part of the community.

Finally, the argument that non-Indian members attending SSMN events undermines their status as a “community” is saddening. The generosity and openness of SSMN members that I know toward non-Indians has always impressed me. Inviting non-Indian members to observe or participate in SSMN events such as the traditional walk across the Sierra from Yosemite to



Mono Lake should be seen as a commendable step toward education of the non-Indian community and an important way to unite Indian and non-Indian communities in acknowledging and healing historic conflict and trauma. Likewise, the SSMN's openness toward other tribes, such as jointly doing the traditional walk with the Mono Lake Paiute, should not be seen as a lack of "community" but rather as a sign of a strong community that interacts and has relationships with other local communities.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. I focus here on the technicalities of the Proposed Finding's ruling, but the historical and contemporary background of this issue should speak for itself—the SSMN is a clearly documented indigenous Nation that has persevered as a strong self-governing community through centuries of colonization, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government's renegeing on its treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,

Darrow Feldstein

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrow", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.



NOV 15 2019

Audrey Lynne Spach  
33 Acacia Ave  
Clovis, Ca. 93612

October 21, 2019

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
Department of the Interior  
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street Northwest  
MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs,

As a non-indigenous citizen of the United States of America, I, Audrey Lynne Spach, recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA (Petitioner #82) as an existing nation and would like to see the United States Government finally acknowledge the reality of this indigenous community as a federally recognized tribe.

It is disappointing to read witness of past investigations by the Office of Federal Acknowledgement, suggesting the neglect of thorough research, consideration, and communication. The Southern Sierra Miwuk's proposed federal recognition should be given the full attention and process according to criteria investigation. I would like to trust that the integrity of the government's OFA will be upheld through this extension for investigation for federal recognition of this tribe, and look forward to that being reflected in the coming decision.

The arguments made in the Proposed Finding Against the Acknowledgement of the Southern Sierra Miwuk, based on history of displacement and lack of community membership lists recorded in the time of 1851, do not lend support to a conclusion of a nonexistent tribe. It actually supports evidence of undeniable challenges that SSM faced through the history of their people in a time when historical records being made were largely under the power of those who were taking them from their homes and placing them on the reservation. Historical facts do prove lineage to tribal leaders from 1850 and show that small groups (or "tribelets" as stated in the document) were combined in the reservation in Merced, upon displacement from their geographical origin. How can the responsibility of proper records of an individual's proof of specific tribal affiliation be put on the descendants of people who were combined with other tribes and given no autonomy or recordkeeping for their own lineage. This does not support the conclusion to erase them as the indigenous people of Yosemite and Mariposa. Denying them of recognition and any support and benefits that other indigenous people have been granted does not make any sense.

I was born in Yosemite Valley in 1979. My father was the manager at the Ahwahnee Hotel at the time, and my family lived in the park for 12 years (1973-1981) and again from 1996-1998. I returned to work in the high country near Tuolumne Meadows for two summers in 1999 and 2000. My family members have lived in and around Mariposa and Midpines which are also original land of the Southern Sierra Miwuk. I still have family members who work in the park. I myself, and members of my family have attended several events associated with the SSM. As a lifelong resident and visitor of these areas, it



has always been my understanding that the Southern Sierra Miwuk were indigenous to this area. I was surprised to find out that they do not have federal recognition.

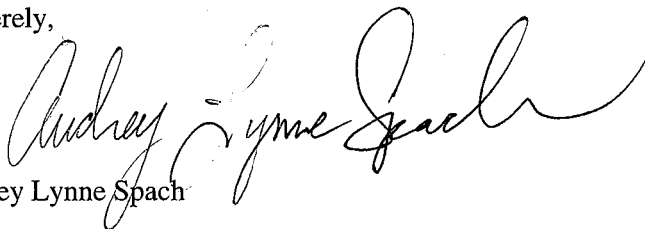
Julia Parker is a family friend who has influenced our relationship and knowledge about the indigenous people of the Yosemite Valley and the surrounding areas. I do understand that Julia's personal family lineage is not SSM, but she did marry into the tribe and has been a highly influential member of that community and its public recognition. This she has done for thousands of park visitors. Her presence, along with many local indigenous peoples including Julia's extended family, Phil Johnson, and Irene Vasquez (to name a few), who educate the public in Yosemite Indian Village, has been one of the treasures of the modern day tourist's experience of Yosemite. This is known by the government's National Park Service. The Southern Sierra Miwuk's continued presence and influence in the park is a natural, and (at the very least) appropriate way to represent the importance of indigenous life and culture in Yosemite. Why then, does the same government, who's National Park Service maintains the tribe's significance in public experience and education, not acknowledge the original people of Yosemite as a tribe?

It is a great honor and blessing to have been born and raised in and around Yosemite National Park. My entire life I have been in relationship with this special place, and I am saddened to know that the indigenous people of this special place must fight so hard, not only to be acknowledged as a nation, but can no longer be born there; and cannot even gather native plants for their medicine, craft, and artwork. The reason I elaborate on my personal experience of life in Yosemite is because the Southern Sierra Miwuk were clearly a part of my understanding (me being a local to the area) of the history and present day place of Yosemite National Park, Mariposa, and the surrounding area.

An undeniable element of any place is the indigenous people whose very existence is intrinsically connected to the existence of the land. When the first explorers and settlers arrived in Yosemite Valley, their description of the beauty of the garden-like valley floor was not the result of a land untouched by humans. It was an astonishing, pure example of a sacred, healthy relationship with human inhabitants who understood themselves to be a part of that place. The indigenous stewards of the place we call Yosemite National Park were the Southern Sierra Miwuk. Their descendants still exist today. Our government recognizes Yosemite Valley as a protected national parkland, yet does not acknowledge the original people who lived and cared for it, the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a nation. The Southern Sierra Miwuk were not only the stewards of the land but those who are in deep communal relationship with the land long before any foreigners arrived.

Please, it is time to honor the indigenous people and ancestors of this country and make a change from past negligence and years of exploitation and disregard. I thank you in advance for honoring my words and considering my input.

Sincerely,

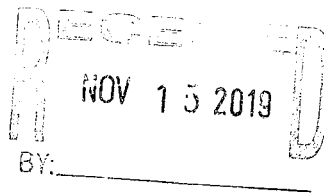
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Audrey Lynne Spach". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Audrey Lynne Spach

(559)575-2498







October 25, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After thirty years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the single vague and subjective criteria that the Nation does not constitute a “community.” The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting this “community” criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s’ birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Indian friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a “community.”

It should go without saying, but most birthday parties and baby showers and graduations do not take attendance lists in most communities, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation.

For the last six summers, I have worked as an interpretive park ranger in Yosemite National Park and have had a chance to interact with both the landscape and with a few of the people of SSMN.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. The SSMN is a clearly documented indigenous Nation that has persevered as a strong self-governing community through centuries of colonization, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government’s reneging on its treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,

Jack Mazza



Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs (AS-IA)  
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

November 3, 2019

Re: Petitioner #82, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To Whom it May Concern:

Why is it still deemed proper procedure for the government to deny unique identity to a group of people that faced campaigns of genocide directed by a state government, that resulted in the death or loss of over 90% of their population? Why is it that the National Park Service (NPS), a government agency, as well as all other prominent members of the (now) Yosemite region recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk identity but the Bureau of Indian Affairs will not?

Aside from wanting to avoid providing the deserved financial and political support for the descendents of the Southern Sierra Miwuk, there's no benefit to perpetuating the denial of their identity. There are clearly descendents of the region's Miwuk ancestors acting in the community as a distinct group; to deny them their own identity is to perpetuate the misconduct of the past.

I had the opportunity of moving to Yosemite Valley for work when I was 18, and have lived in and around the Valley for many years since. In college, I chose to study the Yosemite region and the Sierra Nevada whenever possible. At one point I wrote a research paper entitled "Conservation and Indigenous Environmental Knowledge: The Political Ecology of the Ahwahneechee Tribe." It was this research that made me realize the magnitude of the mistreatment of Native Americans of the Yosemite region, and how recent the mistreatment has been as well. In the past history that I found, some appointed Mariposa Battalion leaders were so appalled by actions towards Natives there that they left the area. The battalion destroyed Yosemite area villages, and tribe members who had been "gathered up" in the name of the treaties were starving. Miwok descendents who were able to remain in the area were told to suppress their language and songs. In present history, descendents in the Valley had their buildings destroyed and were asked to leave. The NPS has recently agreed to allow rebuilding.

I bring up this relatively accepted portion of the region's history to emphasize how resilient the Southern Sierra Miwok have been forced to be. Let's not continue to oppress their efforts to live with the identity that's been passed down to them; as a nation we should now want to recognize and support them. I hope that the AS-IA will uphold its duty to do this, and recognize the identity of the Southern Sierra Miwok just as those in the Yosemite and Mariposa communities do.

Sincerely,

Kelly Bessem  
Environmental Geographer  
HSU Geography, BA; NAU Climate Science, MS



November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to object to and comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After over 30 years of rigorously complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process and fully meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the opinion that the Nation does not constitute a ‘community’ based on a single narrowly defined and culturally subjective criterion. The subjective inadequacies cited in which the Nation fails to meet this ‘community’ criterion are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Native friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a ‘community’. This viewpoint is unfair and frustratingly specific, potentially deciding the future of the Nation on a trivial definition when the rest of the Nation’s evidence of tribal history, identity, and community provides clear and strong evidence that federal recognition is deserved according to the Office of Federal Acknowledgement’s own standards.

It should go without saying, but most birthday parties and baby showers and graduations do not take attendance lists in most communities, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. I also would like to point out the definitions of “community” used in the Proposed Finding are strongly biased toward Anglo-centric community happenings, such as birthday parties, baby showers, and graduations, which in and of itself is problematic when considering what constitutes a ‘community’ in the distinct cultures of SSMN and other Indigenous nations. This definition of ‘community’ in any case is restrictive, allows very little room for interpretation, and ignores the wide variety of ways community can be defined even in Anglo-centric culture, let alone in cultures that writers of this criterion do not identify with.

I am personally familiar with the SSMN through a friend of mine whom is a tribal member. She has invited me, a person of Native descent, to many of the Nation’s community events throughout the years I have known her, as she has many other individuals who are both Native

*and non-Native. Thus, I am personally assured besides the extensive evidence the Nation has* provided themselves of the many opportunities, whether traditional or not, that the Nation creates to come together, support one another and enjoy each other's company. The inclusivity of the Nation actually speaks to their solidarity as a community if they feel able to invite non-members to their events, meaning that they are comfortable enough in their own collective identity and mutual belonging that others can participate without challenging or changing an existing understanding of community held by the Nation. Therefore, the argument that non-Native members attending SSMN events undermines their status as a 'community' is narrow-minded and disappointing. Inviting non-Indian members to observe or participate in SSMN events such as the traditional walk across the Sierra from Yosemite to Mono Lake should be seen as a commendable step toward education of the non-Native community and an important way to unite Native and non-Native communities in acknowledging and healing historic conflict and trauma. Likewise, the SSMN's openness toward other tribes, such as jointly doing the traditional walk with the Mono Lake Paiute, should not be seen as a lack of 'community' but rather as a sign of a strong community that interacts and has relationships with other local communities.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe as they deserve. I focus here on the technicalities of the Proposed Finding's ruling, but the historical and contemporary background of this issue should speak for itself—the SSMN is a clearly documented Indigenous Nation that has persevered and still stands in self-efficacy as a strong self-governing community through centuries of colonization, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government's renegeing on its treaties and other agreements with Indigenous nations. This criterion must be reconsidered.

Most sincerely,

Dixie Blumenshine  
Oglala Sioux Tribal Member

Copy

November 13, 2019

**Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240**

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA

To Whom It May Concern:


I am in full support of federal recognition of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. Your department's denial is clearly a biased decision against a community that has existed and lived and persevered through adversities over hundreds of years at the hands of Europeans/old white men. It deserves the right to be recognized in order to receive many of the benefits entitled to a recognized Indigenous Tribe.

I am a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe, and like my tribe, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has been the target of endless injustice since the European arrival to this continent. Most recently, the OFA has denied recognition based upon a subjective definition of community. That definition comes from a culture that is not Southern Sierra Miwuk. How can that definition even be used then? It's like a woman defining what a man should do to be a woman; can a man really meet those criteria? Obviously the OFA set subjective, unreasonable, non-applicable standards for this Nation.

The way the Proposed Finding denied the petition on the basis of a single element of one of the seven mandatory criteria for federal acknowledgment doesn't meet applicable federal regulations and precedent, and is likely inconsistent with OFA's professional and peer review standards. The denial is flawed and doesn't accurately represent the evidence presented in support of the petition.

Please overturn the denial and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government's renegeing on its treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,



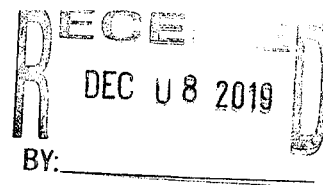
**Nadine Pourier Blumenshine**

**2486 Bliss Ave.**

**Clovis, CA 93611**







November 15, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs  
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
MS-4071-MIB  
Washington DC 20240

**Re: Petitioner #82, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition.**

Dear Sir/Madam:

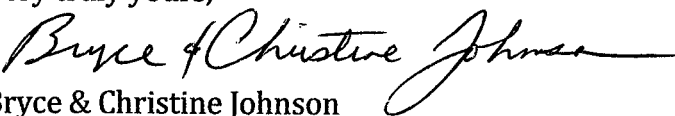
We are writing to express our support for the Petition of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation for federal recognition.

We have resided in Mariposa County, California since 1984. Over these many years, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has made invaluable contributions to our community. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has shared their culture and their values and we are better for it. The tribe's tiring efforts/commitment to obtaining federal recognition has not gone unnoticed. Now, with the passage of time, important and highly respected local tribal leaders/members have passed without obtaining justice for their ancestors who have lived in this area for thousands of years.

It has always been interesting to us that the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has been used to promote Yosemite National Park (within Mariposa County) but not acknowledged as a tribe. Over these many years, we have been concerned with the lengthy and burdensome process the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has been put through. We are aware that five members of Congress have also expressed their concerns with the process as well as the criteria for federal recognition.

Waiting 37 years for a federal government decision regarding what we believe to be obvious and long overdue federal recognition is a denial of due process. Justice delayed has been justice denied to the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation.

Very truly yours,

  
Bryce & Christine Johnson

POB 2162  
Mariposa, CA. 95338



November 16, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs  
1849 C Street NW, MS-4071 MIB,  
Washington, DC 20240

Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment

Dear Office of Federal Acknowledgment,

I am writing to say that I 100% endorse the official federal recognition of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation in the area of Yosemite National Park / Mariposa County / Northern California.

I lived in Mariposa County for 13 years, from 2003 through 2015, and during the time I was there, the Miwuk were endeavoring to be recognized by the US government. I cannot believe this is still not been resolved in their favor yet.

I am not sure how it can be denied that they are a singular tribe of the area, since federally run Yosemite National Park museum has anthropological displays and historical information clearly showing the Miwuk Indians lived in the area when settlers came. This is a clear decision. The historic facts are on the side of the Miwuks.

Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82) is seeking self-determination, self-governance, and acknowledgment through the federal recognition process. This designation will allow the tribe to acquire tribal sovereignty rights. Federal recognition allows access to further health benefits, scholarships for higher education, funding opportunities to support their wellbeing and cultural continuance.

Please give the Miwuk their due respect and put this matter to a final finding in their favor.

Sincerely,

Wendy Davis  
Vancouver, WA 98662



**Department of the Interior**  
**Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs**  
**Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment**  
1849 C Street NW  
MS-4071 MIB  
Washington  
DC 20240

**Re: Petitioner #82, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, CA**

To whom it may concern,

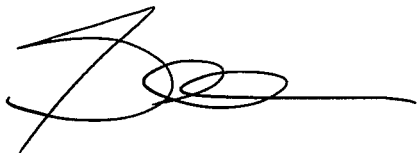
I am writing to express my disappointment with the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgement for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSMN). The SSMN have a long history in my local area, and they deserve to be acknowledged. They entered into an agreement in good faith, and their trust was broken when it came time to federally acknowledge and support them.

The vague definition of "community" outlined in the Proposed Finding ignores the culture and history of the SSMN by attempting to pigeonhole the Nation's activities into a bureaucratic definition of what it means to have a "community". I encourage you to spend time with members of the SSMN, and I believe you'll learn from them the meaning of community.

In addition, the SSMN has achieved recognition by numerous organizations, including Yosemite National Park.

I hope you'll consider overturning the Proposed Finding against recognition of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, and will give them the recognition that they've been petitioning for 30 years to achieve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Stafford Dean', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Stafford Dean**



Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4071-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwok Nation, CA.

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to urge the Department of Interior to recognize the Southern Sierra Miwok as a tribal community deserving of federal recognition. I worked in Yosemite National Park during the years of 2013-2014. During that time, I was well aware of the Southern Sierra Miwok tribe, including individuals who identified as a part of the tribe as well as family and community events within the region. It was clear to me that the tribe had existed as an entity with strong inter-tribal ties and long, continuous familial and cultural histories.

It is difficult to see the justification of the proposed determination to not grant federally recognized tribal status to this group. The lack of recognition is a serious barrier to continued practices including traditional plant and medicine gathering within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park.

I had the honor of working and living closely with members of the Southern Sierra Miwok tribe. Their ancestors lived in that region of the Sierra Nevada for thousands of years. They maintained and stewarded the spectacular forests throughout that time as well as into the present. Together, we restored meadows and forests throughout Yosemite National Park. Their living knowledge and ancestral awareness of the land upon which we lived and worked shaped how all of us who worked within the program interacted with and understood these places.

Failure to federally recognize the tribe makes it more difficult for members of the tribe to restore their language and culture, which includes ceremonies, traditional foods, and care-taking traditions. These traditions have been maintained continuously through generational knowledge despite enormous pressures, violence, and trauma inflicted upon the people of the Southern Sierra Miwok.

It should be clear that the Southern Sierra Miwok, who are indigenous to the lands now called Yosemite and Mariposa, have maintained a sustained relationship among each other as well as to the landscape of their homelands. There is a well-documented history of these people engaging with the National Park Service to continue their traditional practices in place.

Yosemite National Park needs the Southern Sierra Miwok to continue to be restored and stewarded for generations to come. The traditional ecological knowledge possessed by the tribe will continue to enrich the management regime of the National Park, but only to the right and adequate degree if the tribe is federally recognized.

Again, I urge the Department of Interior to recognize the Southern Sierra Miwok as a federally recognized tribe. They are well-deserving of the recognition, and it is the legally, morally, and ethically appropriate action.

Sincerely,

Alex Johnson





Dept. of Interior Off. of Asst. Sec'y

Indian Affairs

Attn: Off. of Federal Acknowledgment

1849 C. Street

Washington DC 20240

Nov. 16, 2019

To Whom This Should Concern:

This is a handwritten letter of support for the recognition (and restitution) of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, petitioner #82.

- The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has and continues to exist and persist as a distinct Indian Community
- The DIOIA's proposed finding issues related to characterizations of "community" are specious and highly misguided in addition to being culturally insensitive & incompetent.

- Federal Recognition is long overdue!
- I urge and implore you to OVERTURN THE PROPOSED FINDING
- RECOGNIZE (and APOLOGIZE) THE SOUTHERN SIERRA MIWUK NATION

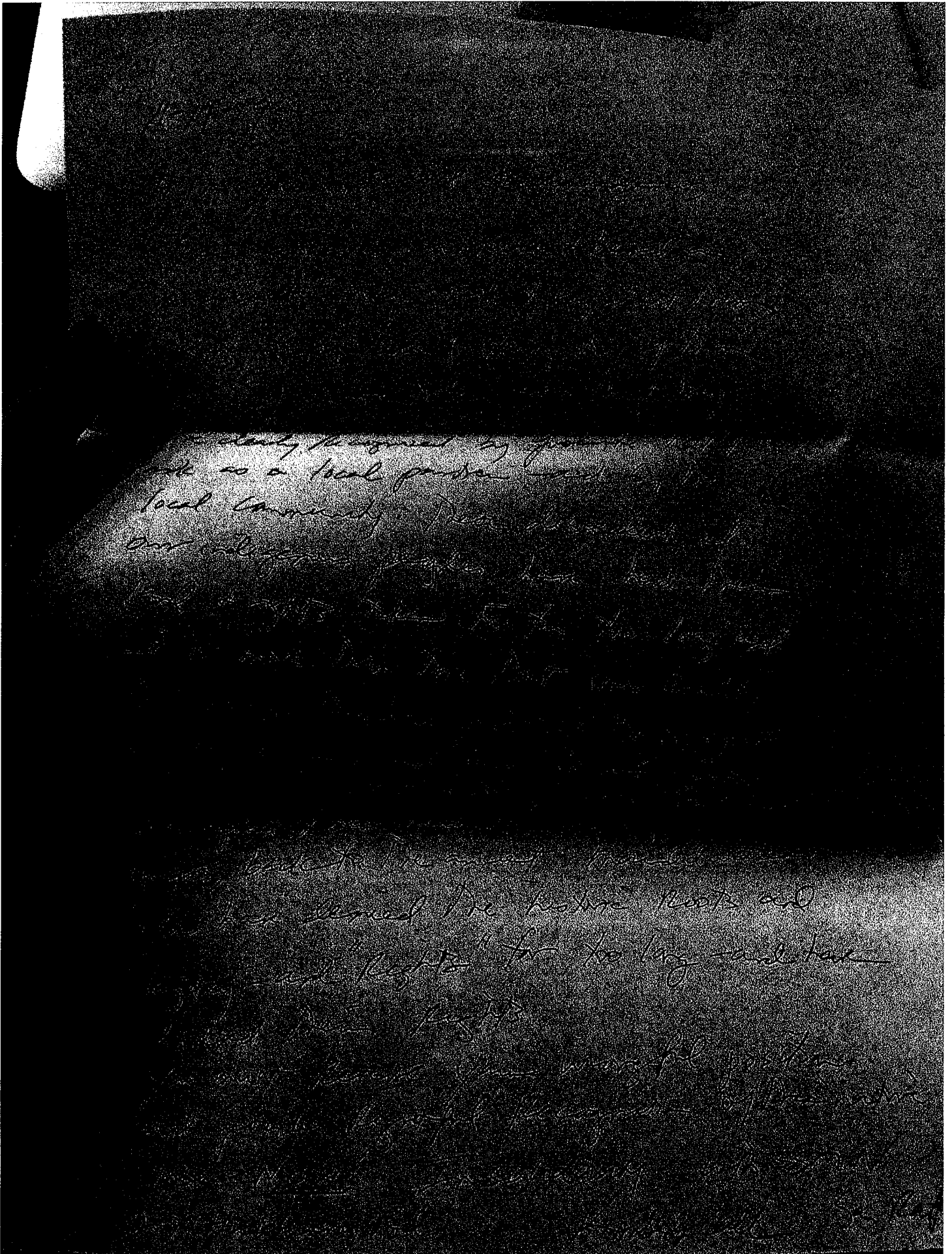
This tribe of the Original Americans has endured centuries of colonization and disrespect.

Please do all you can and must do to restore, recognize and inspire the continued strength, stewardship and deep love that this Miwuk Nation has demonstrated and will continue to do so. It's good for all Americans and the world.

Sincerely,



H. KURIHARA  
341 62<sup>nd</sup> Street  
OAKLAND, CA (2)  
94618





Dear Dept of the Interior Office of the Secretary

I am writing today to express my disagreement with the Department's proposed finding denying federal recognition to the Southern Sierra Mink Nation. This community have stewarded their homeland since time

diligently and patiently over the years. We have worked to achieve federal recognition. Denial of such recognition now, over such arbitrary interpretations of criteria is

we should... the... people of... do to... Southern... proposed f...



I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed findings on the SSMN. The issues raised in the previous OFA public comments are alarming, disheartening for people who have repeatedly been mistreated, denied justice by the Federal government.

The proposed findings issued with modern community do not make sense. Federal Recognition is long overdue for the SSMN. The issues raised in the previous OFA public comments are alarming, disheartening for people who have repeatedly been mistreated, denied justice by the Federal government.

Sincerely, Kate Lindquist  
P.O. Box 1363, Oxnard, CA 91320





Dear Dept of the Interior

7 am

Friday

some recognition  
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of the

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recognition

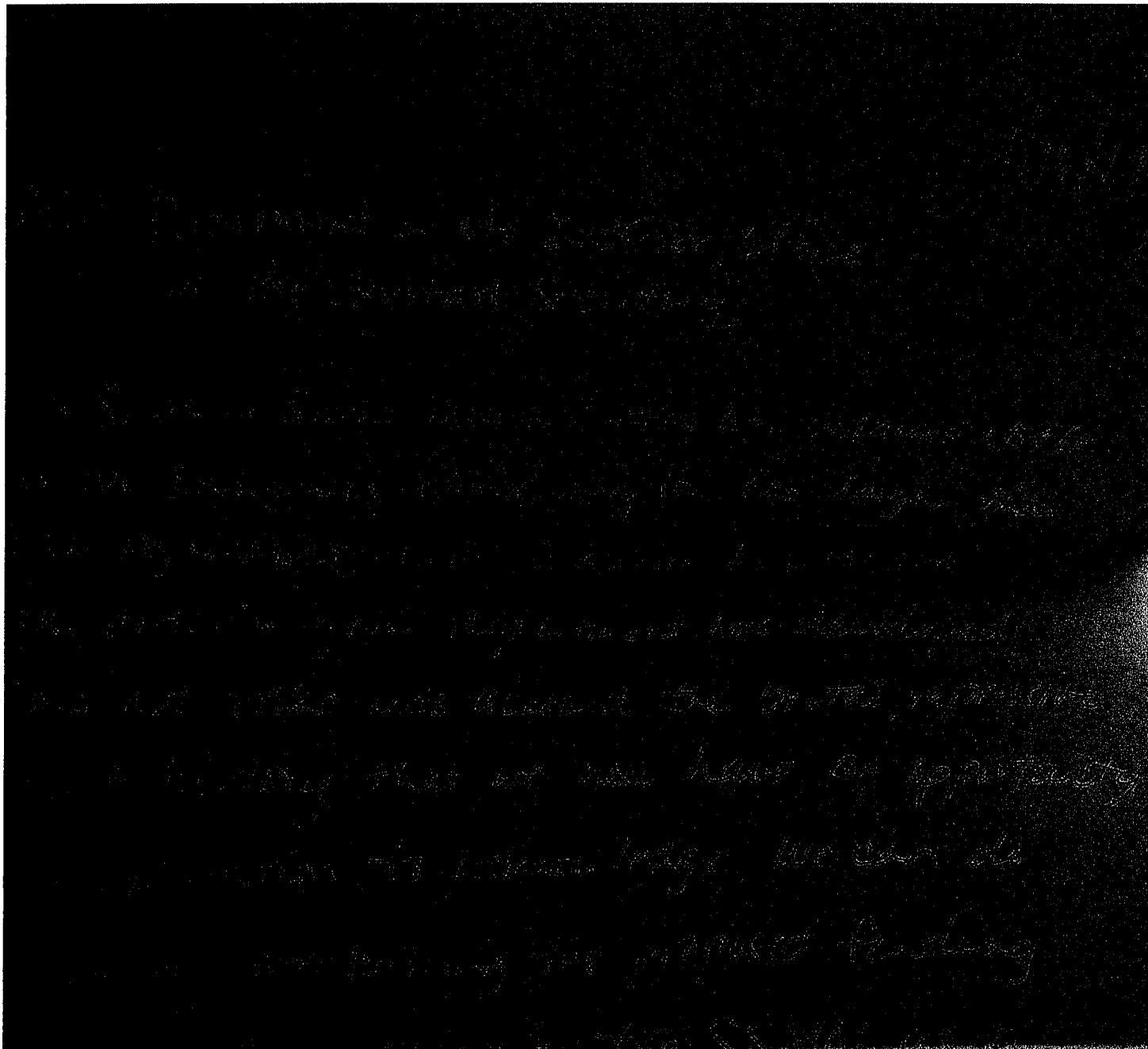
Best

Catherine Meyers

1499 Caroline St

Calumet, MI





Coastal Miwok Tribe

you

Claire Seda, writing from Coastal Miwok  
PO Box 655  
Pt. Reyes Station



RECEIVED  
DEC 08 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

David G. Engle, Ph.D  
Brigitte K. Engle  
3008 Temperance  
Clovis, CA 93611

Nov. 16, 2019

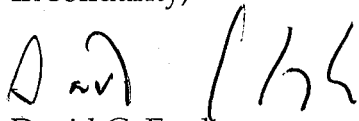
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation,  
P.O. Box 186,  
Mariposa, CA 95338

To whom it may concern,

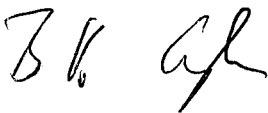
Please find enclosed our letters urging reconsideration of that disappointing Proposed Finding.

Let us hope that the Bureau does reconsider and change its Finding. If not, let us hope that your lawsuit against them is fruitful.

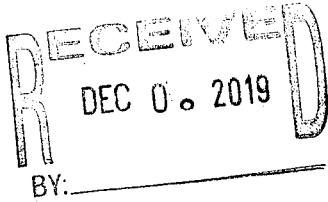
In solidarity,

  
David G. Engle

Brigitte K. Engle







Brigitte K. Engle  
3008 Temperance  
Clovis, CA 93611  
Nov. 16, 2019

Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Proposed Finding re: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82)

Dear Assistant Secretary,

I urge you to reconsider the negative Proposed Finding that the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation not be recognized as a tribe.

Every time I visit the Yosemite Visitor Center with my friends from abroad, I am again touched and horrified by the tragic story told by To Tu Ya/Maria Lebrado Ydrte about the invasion and destruction of her home in Yosemite Valley, the murder of her people and the obliteration of their livelihood.

I am troubled that the increasing restriction of the rights and access to the cultural heritage of the original inhabitants of Yosemite has continued over decades.

This shameful stain of a great injustice has overshadowed the history of Yosemite National Park since its beginning and can never be entirely righted. But federal granting of tribal recognition for the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation can at least mitigate the mistakes of the past and restore the dignity and identity of a suppressed portion of the diverse indigenous peoples in California.

Amongst other privileges recognition would give them their rights to access and to take advantage of the natural resources and to express their culture in their original homeland for all future.

Please reverse the negative proposed finding and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, reinstating their right to self-determination, self-governance, and their own culture.

Brigitte K. Engle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brigitte K. Engle".







RECEIVED  
DEC 08 2019

Nov. 16, 2019

Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention:  
Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

CALIFORNIA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY,  
FRESNO

Proposed Finding re: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82)

Dear Assistant Secretary,

We urge you to reconsider the negative Proposed Finding that the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation not be recognized as a tribe.

The members of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation consider themselves to be a tribe. Non-tribal residents in the area commonly identify individuals of the Nation as Miwuk (or Miwok). Yosemite National Park has until recently not only recognized the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation formally (in contracts), but provided tribal members with housing and certainly even to this day parades members of the tribe at the Yosemite Visitors' Center to provide insights into Miwuk history and culture, and to sell Miwuk keepsakes in the gift store. To falsely assert that descendents of Tenaya, Awanhee, Wawona, and those that even gave Yosemite its name, would not be a tribe does everybody a disservice, including the BIA. Rejecting the Miwuks' right to their identity denies them access to their cultural materials (e.g. in being prohibited to harvest the plant materials necessary for important ceremonies, and incidentally to the construction of the famous Miwuk baskets, taught not only to Miwuks, but also in workshops given in Yosemite NP to a more general public). Such a rejection would be a calloused misconception of tribal designation.

According the *Fresno Bee* (9/9/2019 and 11/12/2019), The Office of Federal Acknowledgement did an extensive review of the application plus supporting materials, and reached affirmative conclusions on all seven criteria for tribal recognition.

To conclude that Miwuks are not a tri be on the basis that members of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation could not prove, for instance, their participation in their community, not prove they attend each others' birthdays, funerals, celebrations, and graduations truly borders on the ridiculous. Since these community interactions are the most natural things in the world, they don't keep special records of such things. Could *you* prove your being an ethnic American solely on the basis of being able to *demonstrate conclusively* your attendance at birthday parties, etc. from 1982 to 2011?

The members of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation talk like a tribe. They "present" (culturally speaking) as a tribe. They walk like a tribe. Neighbors call them a tribe. Obviously they *are* a tribe.

They should be formally recognized as such.

David / H G

Department of Modern and Classical  
Languages and Literatures

Peters Building, Room 393  
5245 North Backer Avenue M/S PB96  
Fresno, CA 93740

David Gray Engle, Ph.D.  
Professor emeritus of Folklore and German  
david\_engle@csufresno.edu; (559) 291-3972

559.278.2386  
Fax 559.278.7878  
www.fresnostate.edu/artshum/mcll



Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation  
PO Box 186  
Mariposa, CA 95338

November 17, 2019

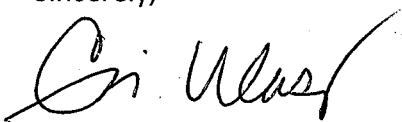
To Whom It May Concern at the SSMN,

Please know that it was in listening to a presentation by Irene Angel Vasquez at the Fibershed Symposium, that I more fully understood the struggles of the SSMN and hence the relationship to our entire California and US citizenship. The cultural integrity and economic well-being of the American Indian must be recognized and affirmed. I share with you below what I have written and sent to the Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs.

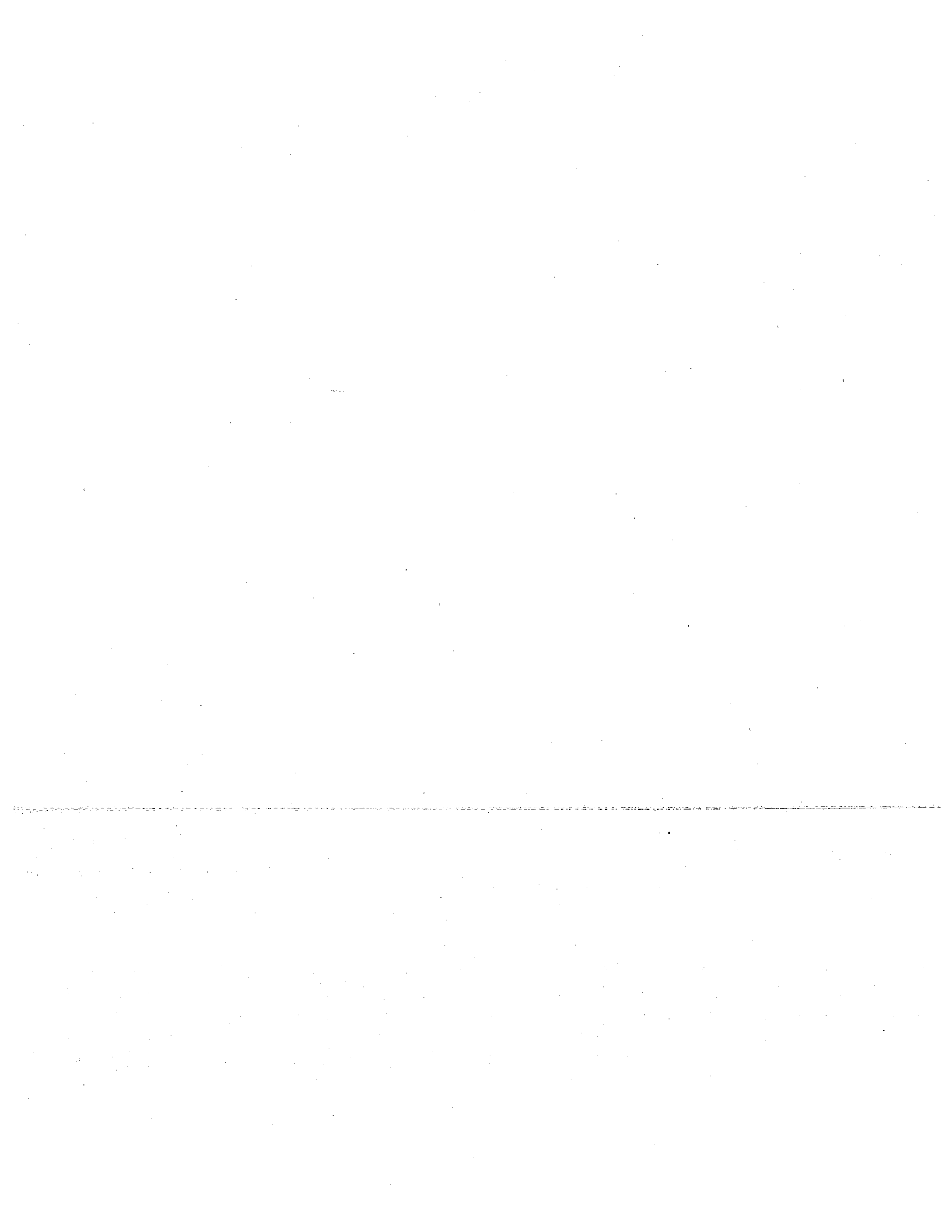
I write to you today to share my full support of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, petitioner #82. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (SSMN) has existed and will continue to exist as a distinct Indian Community. How the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs of the Interior Department has decided not to recognize them as an Indian tribe is audacious. The Yosemite Valley is the ancestral home of the Miwuk. This decision must be overturned and the tribe must be recognized.

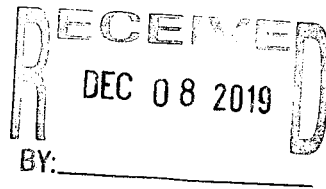
The issues raised in the previous OFA public comments are alarming and disheartening for the people who have repeatedly been mistreated and denied justice by the Federal Government. The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation deserves recognition as an Indian tribe.

Sincerely,



Connie Ulasewicz  
cbuprod@gmail.com





11/18/2019

To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After thirty years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the single vague and subjective criteria that the Nation does not constitute a “community.” The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting this “community” criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s’ birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Indian friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a “community.” As a member of the Jewish faith and community, I can attest to the struggles of a people to fit into the criteria of a foreign culture.

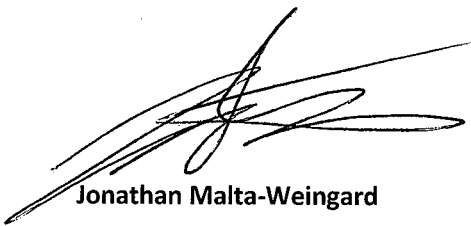
It should go without saying, but all of the birthday parties and baby showers and graduations that I have attended do not take attendance lists, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. I also would like to point out the definitions of “community” used in the Proposed Finding are strongly biased toward Anglo-centric community happenings, such as birthday parties, baby showers, and graduations, which in and of itself is problematic when considering what constitutes a “community” in the distinct cultures of SSMN and other indigenous nations.

I grew up near the territory of the SSMN, in Oakland, California in the San Francisco Bay Area, and have interacted with many members of the Nation, who have always made clear their strong identity as members of SSMN and communicated a clear connection to their SSMN community. I attended college at the University of Santa Cruz with a SSMN member who also communicated a strong community connection and identity with the SSMN. Needless to say this friend of mine were attending university and could not always be home to attend SSMN events. I feel this is relevant to the Proposed Finding’s argument that not all SSMN members regularly attended events—clearly in many cases in this community, and any community, not all members can be there in person all the time, but this does not mean a community does not exist or that members (such as those away at college) need to attend official events in-person to be part of the community.

Finally, the argument that non-Indian members attending SSMN events undermines their status as a “community” is saddening. The generosity and openness of SSMN members that I know toward non-Indians has always impressed me. Inviting non-Indian members to observe or participate in SSMN events such as the traditional walk across the Sierra from Yosemite to Mono Lake should be seen as a commendable step toward education of the non-Indian community and an important way to unite Indian and non-Indian communities in acknowledging and healing historic conflict and trauma. Likewise, the SSMN’s openness toward other tribes, such as jointly doing the traditional walk with the Mono Lake Paiute, should not be seen as a lack of “community” but rather as a sign of a strong community that interacts and has relationships with other local communities. In my own community, the efforts to include non-Jewish people in our ceremonies, events, and even prayer sessions has always been seen as a manifestation of our faith. Rather than diluting the ‘Jewishness’ of a ceremony, or place, it actually enhances our spirituality and community to be inclusiveness. This is seen in multiple Inter-Faith events, where Christians, Muslims and Jews have participated in each other’s ceremonies to the enhancement of everybody’s understanding of the uniqueness of each other’s faith.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. I focus here on the technicalities of the Proposed Finding’s ruling, but the historical and contemporary background of this issue should speak for itself—the SSMN is a clearly documented indigenous Nation that has persevered as a strong self-governing community through centuries of colonization, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be another egregious example in the long history of the U.S. Government’s reneging on its treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Malta-Weingard', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Jonathan Malta-Weingard**

Sr. HR Benefits Administrator

465 California Street, 9th Floor | San Francisco, CA | 94104 USA

Tel: 415.743.3358 (direct) | [jonathan.malta-weingard@asiafoundation.org](mailto:jonathan.malta-weingard@asiafoundation.org)

RECEIVED  
DEC 08 2019  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_

November 18, 2018

Mr. William H. Leonard  
Chair  
Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation  
4630 Ben Hur Road  
PO Box 186  
Mariposa, California 95338

Dear Mr. Leonard

I am writing you to provide a copy of the attached letter that I wrote to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs.

Thank you.



Aldo E. Salerno, Ph.D.  
1023 Gaither Road  
Rockville, MD 20850





November 18, 2019

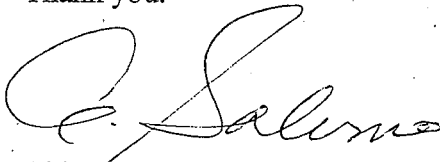
Tara Sweeney  
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
MS-4660-MIB  
1849 C. Street  
Washington D.C. 20240

Lee Fleming  
Director  
Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
1849 C. Street  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Sweeney and Mr. Fleming,

I wish to know the status of my May 7, 2019, letter to you in which I requested interested party status for the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation and Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians petitions for Federal acknowledgment. As of today, I have still not received a response from you. As I said in my May 7, 2019, letter I make this request as a researcher with a critical interest in and extensive knowledge of both these petitions. From 2001 to 2017, I was an historian at the Office of Federal Acknowledgment. In addition, I worked extensively on both of these petitions when they were under active consideration at the Department. I am acting as an informal advisor for the Southern Sierra Miwuk and I intend to offer the same services to the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians depending on the outcome of their proposed finding on Federal acknowledgment due out in April 2020. By having interested party status, I will be able to provide as much support as possible to these two tribes in their pursuit of Federal acknowledgment. Please advise me of the status of my request for interested party status as soon as possible. For your information, I have provided a copy of this letter to the leadership of the Southern Sierra Miwuk, the Grand River Band of Ottawa Indians, and to Congressman Raúl Manuel Grijalva, Chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

Thank you.



Aldo E. Salerno, Ph.D.  
1023 Gaither Road  
Rockville, MD 20850



To: Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement 1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Dept. of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After thirty years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official criteria for recognition, your proposed finding denies the recognition of the tribe based on the single vague and subjective criteria that the Nation does not constitute a “community.” The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting this “community” criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that community members attend each other’s’ birthday parties and baby showers, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN events by non-Indian friends or members from other tribes means that SSMN is not a “community.”

It should go without saying, but most birthday parties and baby showers and graduations do not take attendance lists in most communities, nor are detailed records and dates taken about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While I’m sure the SSMN members can provide testimony that they do in fact support each other as a community and have strong relationships, the need to prove this is ridiculous, especially given that the SSMN met every other criteria, are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner, are recognized by the local communities and other local tribes as a community and Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted), host multiple well attended community events each year, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. I also would like to point out the definitions of “community” used in the Proposed Finding are strongly biased toward Anglo-centric community happenings, such as birthday parties, baby showers, and graduations, which in and of itself is problematic when considering what constitutes a “community” in the distinct cultures of SSMN and other indigenous nations.

The argument that non-Indian members attending SSMN events undermines their status as a “community” is saddening. Inviting non-Indian members to observe or participate in SSMN events such as the traditional walk across the Sierra from Yosemite to Mono Lake should be seen as a commendable step toward education of the non-Indian community and an important way to unite Indian and non-Indian communities in acknowledging and healing historic conflict and trauma. The SSMN’s openness toward other tribes, such as jointly doing the traditional walk with the Mono Lake Paiute, should not be seen as a lack of “community” but rather as a sign of a strong community that interacts and has relationships with other local communities.

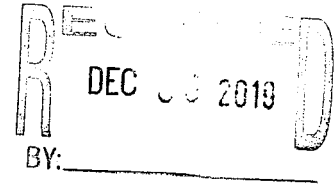
Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. They have spent over 30 years petitioning for federal recognition and have met in good faith every bureaucratic hurdle—to deny them federal recognition at this point due to lack of proven birthday party and baby shower attendance would be an egregious example of the U.S. Government nullifying its treaties and agreements with indigenous nations.

Sincerely,

Grace Blacker



Department of the Interior: Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C St, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington DC 20240



To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of federal recognition for the Southern Sierra Mi-Wuk Nation, Petitioner #82.

Having worked in Yosemite from 2009 – 2015, then again in 2017, I have seen members of the SSMN on their Spiritual Walk and heard stories of the sweat lodge at Tenaya Lake. My friend and former coworker, Irene Vasquez—who can trace her lineage back to Peggy Shea (Beale), a Mi-Wuk woman born in the Indian Village in Yosemite National Park—has described the power of her community and their meetings to me. Listening to how she learned traditional practices such as basket weaving and acorn processing, how she interviewed her ancestors for her thesis, how she attended meetings on the construction of the Wahhoga Roundhouse... Standing in front of the petroglyphs with her, listening to the soft breeze and the birds and her describing to us the pull of Pate Valley and how that deep connection with the land helped inspire the start of the Spiritual Walk... There has never been a single second where I have doubted that the Southern Sierra Mi-Wuk Nation exists; they are a community who have fought to maintain their traditions and language despite the genocidal removal from their homeland.

I am a white woman from the Carolinas. I do not know of any words adequate to describe the connection that I feel with and the love that I have for Yosemite National Park and the Sierra, despite going there for the first time at age nineteen. As such, I can not fathom the connection that the SSMN must feel to the land now known as Yosemite nor the horror of being forcibly removed from their lands nor the knowledge that they must apply for permits (which can be denied) from the National Park Service to continue their traditions that involve the land.

There is no way to repair the damage done to the SSMN in the creation of Yosemite National Park. They suffered great and horrific trauma when they were forced out of their homes and, often, into boarding schools. The land itself suffered as well. This is not simply a socio-historical fact, but, rather, also an ecological one. When NPS took control of Yosemite, they drained meadows, pulled debris from the river, and restricted fires, halting the burn cycle used by the SSMN. The park lost species. The rivers widened. Fires raged.

Recently, the park has been taking measures to ameliorate this damage, to attempt to restore Yosemite to its pre-NPS condition. This is improving the ecology of the park. Now the federal government must attend to the human aspect of the removal of the SSMN by granting them tribal recognition. This will allow them to do things like participate in ceremonies and traditional practices without requesting permission from NPS and apply for educational grants, strengthening their community and providing more opportunities for tribal members.

Finally, having reviewed the Proposed Finding, I am horrified by the amount of intrusive documentation requested as well as the implications that, because some members of the SSMN no longer live in the area, their ancestry is somehow less valid. I doubt most people have a role call for everyone attending weddings, soft ball games, or dinners; certainly, few people keep dedicated records of arguments in case they have to prove one day that they drunkenly fought with a close friend or relative. The absence of such records should not negate the existence of the SSMN as a community and a people.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather Briggs". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Heather Briggs



November 19, 2019

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs  
Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
MS-4071 MIB  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California

To whom it may concern:

I recently read an article in the Merced Sun-Star newspaper that was written by Carmen George of the Fresno Bee.

“The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation has been waiting 37 years for a decision from the U.S. Government about their petition for federal acknowledgement as a Native American Tribe.”

This made me cry. This made me sad. This made me upset and mad and disgusted. Thirty-seven years. THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS.

“...Native Americans in Yosemite were killed and forced out of the park in the 1800s...”

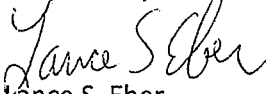
This was genocide. This group of indigenous people lived in and around the park for 8,000 years. They were driven from their land, watched their villages get destroyed, and witnessed the murder and enslavement of their people, their families, their neighbors.

Their ancestors signed treaties in good faith with the United States of America during the gold rush. These treaties were hidden away and left unratified leaving the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation and many indigenous people of California landless. No land to call home. It was their land. Their land was stolen from them.

This nation of people deserve access to all of the benefits and assistance given to federally-recognized tribes. They deserve health benefits, scholarship opportunities, and funding opportunities to support their wellbeing and cultural continuance.

Thirty-seven years to make a decision is disgusting, demeaning, and senseless. Give them their federal recognition. They deserve it. The United States of America will not give them their land back. So at least give them federal recognition.

Respectfully submitted,



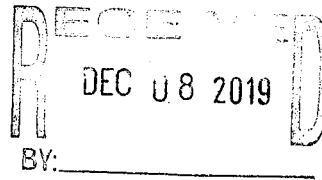
Lance S. Eber

3016 Bedford Drive, Merced, CA, 95340-2728





Irene Barnard  
1086 Lilac Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407



Dept. of the Interior Office of the Asst. Secretary  
—Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Asst. Secretary:

I'm writing to comment on the Proposed Finding against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. After 30 years of patiently complying with the BIA federal recognition petition process, and meeting six of the seven official recognition criteria, this tribe is being denied recognition by your office on the single vague, subjective criterion that the Nation does not constitute a "community." The supposed inadequacies cited in meeting the "community" criteria are outrageous, such as lack of evidence that members attend each other's birthday or baby shower celebrations, and suggesting that attendance of SSMN's events by non-Indian friends or other tribe members means that SSMN is not a "community."

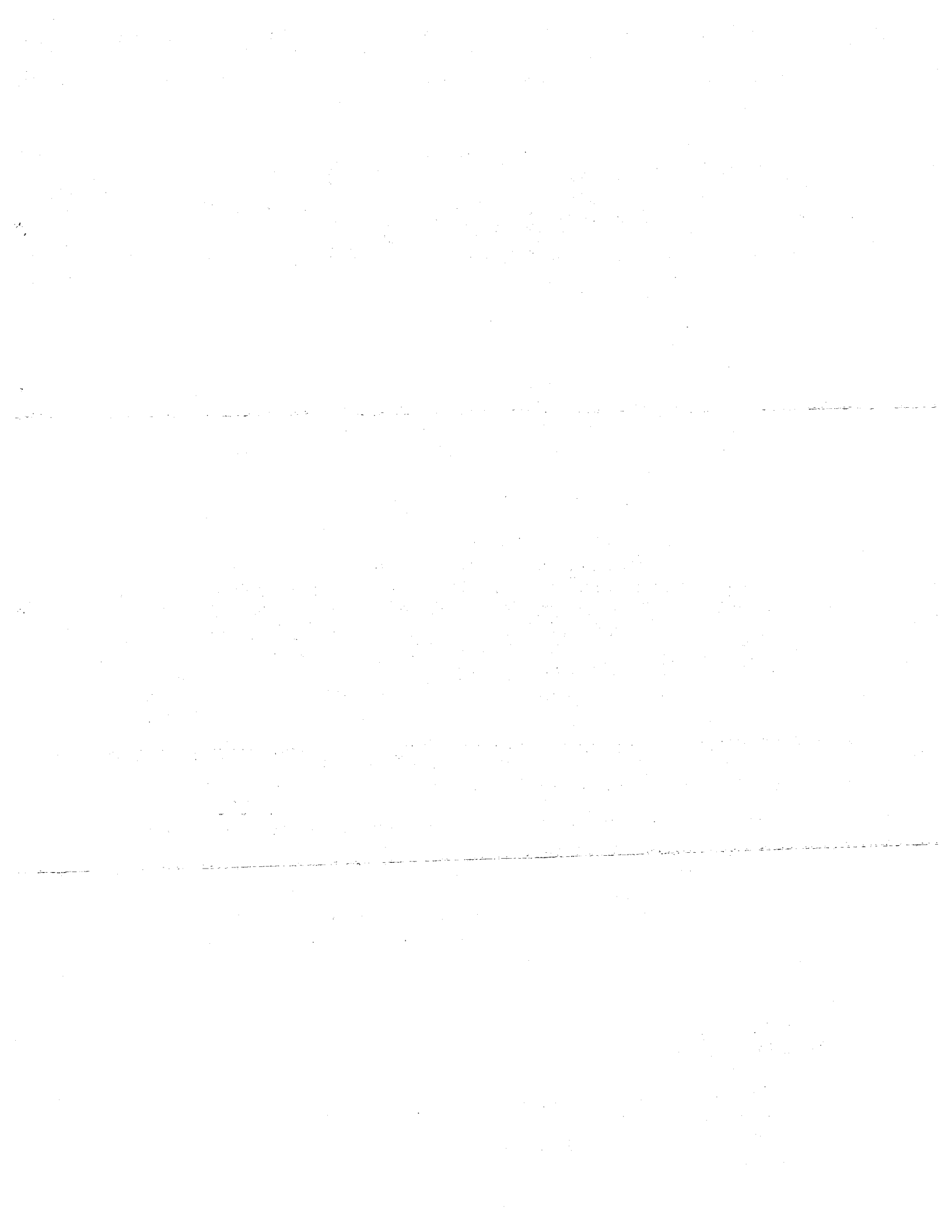
Obviously, most baby showers, graduation and birthday parties in communities don't keep attendance lists; nor are detailed, dated records kept about community members helping each other in times of trouble. While SSMN members could undoubtedly provide testimony in support of their being a community, the fact that they should prove this is ridiculous, especially in light of the fact that they met every other criterion, and they're recognized as a community by Yosemite National Park, and other tribes and communities as well. They also hold multiple well-attended community events annually, and have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation. Additionally, the idea of criteria such as baby showers used in identifying a community are primarily Anglo-Saxon concepts, therefore problematic especially in light of Indians' historical mistreatment at the hands of the federal government.

It is to this Nation's credit that they open events to others, in the spirit of unity, equity, and healing from trauma, and this generosity of spirit should not be used against them. Please overturn the Finding and recognize the SSMN as a Federally Recognized Tribe. The SSMN is a well-documented indigenous nation that has persevered as a strong self-governing community in the face of centuries of colonization, miscegenation, land theft, and systematic disenfranchisement. They have met every other criterion faithfully and diligently, and to deny them recognition at this stage for a triviality such as birthday parties or baby showers would be another egregious example of the US federal government renegeing on treaties and other agreements with indigenous nations.

Thank you,

Irene Barnard

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Irene Barnard".



**Michael P. Cohen**  
2215 Lindley Way  
Reno, Nevada 89509-3724  
Phone (775) 828-4283  
mpcohen0713@att.net

Sunday, November 24, 2019

Department of the Interior Office of the Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Sirs:

I am a recognized and well known historian of Yosemite, the region, politics, and the National Park. Like others of my profession, I am well aware of the long standing—though denied—rights of the Miwuk in Yosemite.

As you know, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (Petitioner #82) is seeking self-determination, self-governance, and acknowledgment through the federal recognition process. This designation will allow the tribe to acquire tribal sovereignty rights. Federal recognition allows access to further health benefits, scholarships for higher education, funding opportunities to support our wellbeing and cultural continuance.

How is it possible for the federal government to deny these rights? How this petition could possibly be denied is simply incomprehensible to anyone familiar with the region, the tribe, and the history of relations.

Why The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation could be evaluated under older regulations instead of the contemporary revised ones is beyond understanding.

Having lived in a region (Cedar City Utah) during the era when the Southern Paiute regained tribal status in 1980, I watched firsthand as the tribe regained its health, its members recovered their dignity, and the community flourished. Tribal status is an essential step in holding together the community and insuring the health of its members. Refusal of tribal status is a form of genocide.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Cohen



Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgement  
1849 C Street NW  
MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC 20240

To the Office of Federal Acknowledgement,

I am writing in support of the Southern Sierra  
Miwuk Nation, petition # 82.

After 30 years of complying with the BIA  
federal recognition process their federal recognition  
is long overdue.

Please overturn the Proposed Finding and recognize  
the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation as a federally  
recognized tribe. In so doing, you will  
be recognizing a people who have existed and  
lived on the Sierra and took care of it, and  
recognizing and preserving the community  
which will continue to care and preserve it  
for our country, our nation.

Thank you -  
Yours truly,

Mervyn Matsushima  
2444 Valley Street





# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park

P. O. Box 577

Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A22 (YOSE-RMS)

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DEC 18 2019

Assistant Secretary- Indian Affairs  
Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
MS-4660-MIB  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs,

We are writing to provide information regarding Petitioner #82: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, California Petition for Federal Recognition.

Yosemite National Park (the Park) has an on-going consultation relationship with the American Indian Council of Mariposa County/Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation (AICMC). This relationship has existed for over forty years. In the course of these consultations, AICMC officials have brought to the discussion the unique interests and views of their distinct Indian community, whose ancestral ties to Yosemite National Park have spanned multiple generations and began prior to the establishment of the Park, and which are reflected in the traditions, cultural values and spiritual beliefs and practices of their community.

Yosemite National Park maintains consultation relationships with seven distinct American Indian tribes and groups that claim traditional cultural association with park lands and resources. In addition to five federally-recognized American Indian tribes, AICMC is one of two non-federally recognized American Indian groups that participates in consultation with the Park.

In addition to participating in consultations on many park undertakings each year, AICMC, on behalf of its members, has consulted with Yosemite National Park on three of the Park's guiding documents including the Yosemite General Management Plan (1980), Merced Wild and Scenic River Final Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (2014), and the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Final Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (2014).

In June 2018, the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service at Yosemite National Park, and AICMC signed a thirty year General Agreement in order to construct and maintain a cultural and ceremonial site, named *Wahhoga*, within the Park. The NPS provides facilities and services to provide education regarding American Indian history and continuation of cultural traditions for this and future generations. AICMC has agreed to provide development and administration of cultural programs for the Park at *Wahhoga*.

Sincerely,

Michael T. Reynolds  
Superintendent





Electronic cc:

Nicole Athearn, Chief, Resources Management and Science, Yosemite National Park

Joe Meyer, Chief of Staff, Yosemite National Park

Scott Carpenter, Cultural Resources Program Manager, Yosemite National Park

Liz Williams, Cultural Anthropologist/Tribal Liaison, Yosemite National Park

cc:

William Leonard, Chair, AICMC



Dec. 22, 2019

To: Department of the Interior  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Indian Affairs  
Attention: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4071 MIB  
Washington, DC  
20240

Dear Department of the Interior office of the Assistant Secretary,

I am writing to comment on the Proposed Finding Against Federal Acknowledgment of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. You have denied recognition based on the criteria that the Nation does not constitute a "community."

Your list of <sup>reasons</sup> the rationale for this decision - contains items that are prima facie insubstantial, ill-reasoned, & in defiance of common sense, e.g. "lack of evidence" that community members attend each others' birthday parties and baby showers.

The Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation are recognized by Yosemite National Park as a partner. They are recognized by the communities in their locale, as well as by other local tribes as a community and a Nation (see other comment letters that have been submitted). They host multiple well-attended community events each year. They have a well-documented history and identity as a Nation and as a community.

I have made friends with people from this community and feel lucky to know even the little bit I have learned of their community culture. It defies logic that after 30 years

→  
over

of their patently complying with the BIA Federal recognition process, and their meeting 6 of the 7 official criteria for recognition, that at the eleventh hour you could conceive of this flimsy excuse - lack of evidence that community members attend each others' birthday parties and baby showers - to deny the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation Federal Acknowledgment.

I am sure that you understand that many people are concerned with your actions, and that having the time of this public comment period to reconsider your position is a welcome opportunity to hit the "reset button." I appreciate the hard work you do on behalf of all Americans, and on behalf of all the Native people whom you serve.

Please overturn the proposed finding and recognize the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation as a Federally Recognized Tribe. While I have focused in this letter on the issue of the "baby showers and birthday parties reasoning," the Southern Sierra Miwok Nation has a clear, unambiguous record of self-governance, good faith in dealing with thirty years of requests from the BIA, and a patently clear functioning community. Please, do the right thing, immediately.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Skezas

Amy Skezas

PO Box 2506

Petaluma, CA 94953

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Dept. of the Interior - Office of the Asst. Secretary - Indian Affairs  
 Attn: Office of Federal Acknowledgment  
 1849 C St. NW, MS-4071 MIB  
 Washington DC 20240



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JAN 10, 2020

I sent the letter certified,  
 Return Receipt requested,  
 so here is the name of the US  
 government person who signed  
 for my letter, & date they  
 signed.

Praying for you to be granted Federal  
 recognition.

Sincerely,  
 Amy Slezas

