



October 19, 2022

**Tribal Council**

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The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write on behalf of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, a federally recognized tribal government located in rural Northern California near Sacramento, to request "Walker Ridge" be added to Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument (BSMNM) through a Presidential Proclamation based on the 1906 Antiquities Act.

Yocha Dehe also requests that the area be renamed "Molok Luyuk" (pronounced Ma.lok/ Lue.yoke), which means "Condor Ridge" in the Tribe's Patwin language. Condors once flew over the ridge in abundance, and ongoing restoration efforts could allow condors to return if successful in protecting this area.

Currently, 7,202 acres of Molok Luyuk are within the existing monument, and 13,753 acres are adjacent to but not within the monument boundary. All of this area falls within the traditional territory of the Patwin people and is culturally vital to the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. Yocha Dehe requests that the site be cohesively protected, with an expansion of the BSMNM to include all 22,292 acres of Molok Luyuk.

Molok Luyuk is steeped in thousands of years of rich history and is profoundly meaningful to the Patwin people. Elements of the natural landscape on the ridge have traditional cultural significance to the Patwin tribes. They include areas where religious ceremonies were practiced and sites central to Patwin people's origin stories. Many of the plant and animal species found in this area are traditionally crucial to the lifeways of Native people, and we consider their protection and stewardship to be part of the Tribe's sacred responsibility to the land. Molok Luyuk is also renowned among botanists and other scientists because of its plant diversity and fascinating geology. From atop Molok Luyuk on a clear day, visitors can see a vast swath of California, from south of the San Francisco Bay Area and north to Mount Shasta.

Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation

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### Past and Current Threats to Molok Luyuk

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands on Molok Luyuk have been threatened repeatedly since the 1970s by ill-conceived mining, road construction, and energy development proposals. In addition, the BLM lacks proper resourcing to manage recreation and other uses in the area effectively. The area is increasingly popular for recreation, such as wildflower viewing, hiking, biking, camping, sightseeing, and equestrian trails, but suffers from unauthorized ATV activity which is destroying critical habitat throughout the ridge, and unauthorized camping which creates a fire hazard.

### Co-Management

Stewardship of indigenous lands has been a priority for tribes for millennia. We strongly support re-establishing access for the Patwin people and using traditional ecological practices on the land. Yocha Dehe is currently developing a co-management agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that could radically improve conditions on these critically important public lands for the benefit of people and wildlife and protect several diverse habitat types endemic to the area.

We request that the proclamation include provisions requiring co-management of the area, including provisions for meaningful consultation and ongoing participation in the management of Molok Luyuk, similar to the provisions proposed in the legislation detailed below.

### Legislative Efforts

Yocha Dehe has worked closely with a coalition of local, state, and federal agencies, organizations, and landowners, to expand the monument through legislation. Although the House Bill had bipartisan support, and the Senate Bill was passed out of committee by unanimous consent, both H.R. 6366 and Senate bill S 4080 have not reached your desk.

This Proclamation would also be key to meeting the goal of permanently protecting 30 percent of the nation's land and water by the year 2030, an objective that has been adopted by both federal and state administrations and would provide a model for other similar actions elsewhere.

We urge you to approve our request for a presidential proclamation to protect this critically important and historic cultural landscape. If you have any questions, please get in touch with our federal lobbyist Aurene Martin at 202.250.0477 or [amartin@spiritrockllc.com](mailto:amartin@spiritrockllc.com).

Wile bo,



Anthony Roberts  
Tribal Chairman

cc: Debra A. Haaland, Secretary, Department of the Interior  
Brenda Mallory, Chair, CEQ  
Senator Diane Feinstein  
Senator Alex Padilla  
Representative John Garamendi  
Representative Mike Thompson