



Yosemite Gateway Partners

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<http://www.yosemitegatewaypartners.org/>

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

August 2, 2019

I write you as the President of a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization which lists “non-advocacy” as one of our core principles—but that self-disciplined principle is strictly for the purpose of maintaining institutional objectivity.

And it does not prohibit me from supplying a bit of the history of our organization’s long-held policy of acknowledging ***without question the status of the Southern Sierra Miwuk Tribe as an independent, wholly-sovereign entity.***

From the founding of our organization, the Yosemite Gateway Partners has viewed our Southern Sierra Miwuk neighbors with the same recognition of independence we afford our other area partner tribes. Those tribes (who have achieved Federal Acknowledgement/Recognition) include, but are not limited to: the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians, North Fork Rancheria, Jackson Rancheria, Chicken Ranch Rancheria and others.

And we who have lived here for decades and in some cases for generations as direct neighbors of the Miwuk: are in a position to know well not only the history of the Southern Sierra Miwuk as an independent tribal entity, but also their present-day activities as a tribal collective. And personally, in my case: to have been honored to attend some tribal meetings and events. It is that one-on-one, personal and observatory nature of our relationship with the tribe that shows us clearly, and in fact: mandates our unqualified decision to show them the respect they are absolutely due as an independent entity.

As the tribe’s protracted quest for Federal Recognition continues—now for decades, the Yosemite Gateway Partners respectfully asks you to consider our own long historic acknowledgement of the Southern Sierra Miwuk as a sovereign nation. Please read our mission statement below and consider the gravitas of our experience, knowledge and opinion in this process.

Sincerely,

Les Marsden
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559.708.6027 (Cell-Limited Service)
President, Yosemite Gateway Partners (YGP)
National Park Service Centennial Ambassador



Yosemite Gateway Partners is a partnership of government agencies, non-profit organizations, tribes, individuals and businesses that acknowledge the interdependence of Yosemite National Park and the surrounding communities, and collaborate on and address issues of regional importance to create sustainable cultural, natural and economic prosperity.