



## **Wahhoga Committee of the AICMC/SSMN**

### **WAHHOGA VILLAGE Indian Cultural Center Yosemite Valley**

## **Mission Statement**

Yosemite is a World Heritage site, representing the significance of the Yosemite Indians as the original caretakers of these lands for unknown millennia. We are in a moment of our history that needs to take this connection seriously in order to maintain the balance and wisdom of our ancestors who understood the natural laws. Wahhoga is here now to represent and continue their tradition and culture through the spiritual practices of ceremony and ultimately a contribution to the National Park that can inspire and educate the millions of people that visit Yosemite.

## **Education**

To have the Wahhoga Village represented as an educational center would be an incredible contribution to what is termed “outdoor education.” Organizations such as Nature Bridge operating inside Yosemite could work together with the awareness and sensitivity that comes through the connection with the ancestors to again broaden the realm of education that could contribute to the public schools’ systems as well.

Outside educational courses for Indian youth are scheduled to begin in the fall of 2022, funded by a grant awarded to the AICMC/SSMN.

## **Vision**

Our Elders had a vision. They would create a place in Yosemite Valley, our ancestral homelands, where our people could come to honor the ancestors’ while living and sharing our cultural heritage. This place would be for all the

people to come for education and healing. They chose Wahhoga Village, the site of an ancient Indian village, and the New Village, where some of the Elders lived from 1930 to 1969 in cabins built by the park service, for the Indian Cultural Center that we call Wahhoga Village.

The purpose of the Wahhoga Village is to preserve the traditional cultural and spiritual lifeways of the Yosemite Indians for this and future generations, and provide a unique opportunity for park visitors to learn about the local Indians.

The Elders envisioned that the Wahhoga Indian Cultural Center would have two components: A traditional village and a modern community building. The traditional village will acknowledge and honor the spiritual connection to the land and the ancestors, and the modern community building to prepare meals to share in the traditional way, and to provide sanitary facilities and potable water.

Today the Elders' vision is becoming a reality.

The Indian community is NOW constructing the first and most important structure, the traditional Ceremonial Roundhouse. An all-native crew from Jackson Rancheria Construction have been working building the foundation and collecting and preparing materials, and soon the Ceremonial Roundhouse will be dedicated.

## **Planning**

The Indian Cultural Center was authorized in the 1980 General Management Plan for Yosemite National Park. Later, Conceptual Designs and 100% Design Development & Specifications were developed during the review process for the National Environment Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act, documented in the Yosemite Lodge Area Redevelopment Plan Environmental Assessment 2010 Finding of No Significant Impact. Two traditional Miwuk dwellings, umacha's, were built on the pad of the Castro family's cabin as a high school graduation project, one other by the Dondero family and other families are planning to build theirs.

The goal for completion of the ICC is 2026.

## **Budget Items**

- Utilities for water, sewer, and electricity for the ICC land assignment
- Return of Wilson Cabin
- Construction Drawings and Specifications for the Community Building
- Construction of modern structures
- Landscaping

## **Agreements**

On June 1, 2018, a 30-year term GENERAL AGREEMENT between the UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AT YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK and the AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL OF MARIPOSA COUNTY INC. also known as THE SOUTHERN SIERRA NIWUK NATION NATIONAL PARK SERVICE formalizing the partnership for the Indian Cultural Center was ratified.

AICMC/SSMN is a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization in California with headquarter offices in Mariposa, California.

PLEASE SEND DONATIONS TO:

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