



Newsletter February 2024

Kw'tsan National Monument

Quechan Tribal Council has been working and supporting the Kw'tsan National Monument Proposal.

An informational meeting was held on January 15, 2024, at the Quechan Community Center for tribal members. The purpose was to explain the reasons for wanting a National Monument and the process for acquiring that status. Since, President Biden and Vice President Harris are vocal supporters of Native America about initiating National Monuments during their administration. This can be achieved through the Antiquities Act of 1906 which gives a U. S. President the ability to establish general legal protection of cultural and natural resources of historic or scientific interest on federal lands.

“The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe has proposed this new national monument, and the Quechan people remain committed to the preservation of cultural values, belief systems, life ways, traditional practices, and the sovereign legal rights of Native American people.”

A second informational meeting was held January 23, 2024, for stakeholders (other tribes, companies, agencies, and/or organizations) in person and virtually. At this meeting, the website was revealed, and it was encouraged for stakeholders go there to sign a letter of support.

On February 16, 2024 several tribal members, news media, and other interested parties were given an aerial view of the potential site of the National Monument. Many of those participants were interviewed as to their thoughts about the Monument.

In California, Governor Newsome signed into law Senate Bill (SB) 337 to conserve at least 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030 (30 X 30). The governor has also signed a letter of support for our Monument. Additionally, we are supporting Torres-Martinez in their quest to establish Chuckwalla National Monument.

The next step is to continue seeking support with Congressional State and Federal representatives as well as federal officials (Secretary Deb Haaland, President Biden, and Vice President Harris).

Our thanks to the Kw'tsan Cultural Committee - Manfred Scott (Acting Director) and members Ernestine Noreiga, Jerilyn Swift Arrow, and Lena Ortega for doing all the leg work for our Monument. Thanks also to Lycia Maddox Ortega who does a lot of technical work.

Ten Tribes Partnership (Colorado River)

On February 14, 2024, the Tribal Council traveled to Phoenix for a Ten Tribes Partnership meeting. The Fort Yuma Indian Tribe hosted the event in which Council members Virgil Smith, Donald Medart Jr., Zion White, and Gloria McGee were in attendance to represent the tribes as hosts. Virgil Smith is our tribal liaison to the meeting that is held in either Phoenix or Albuquerque at least six times a year. There is an annual meeting in Las Vegas for CRUWA (Colorado River Users Water Association).

Gloria McGee provided the Invocation for the meeting. Donald Medart Jr. presented information to the group (those tribes present and those virtually) about our pursuit of the Kw'tsan National Monument. We are seeking support from member tribes which includes Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribe, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain, Ute Indian Tribe, Cocopah Indian Tribe, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, and Navajo Nation, asked members to support our effort. We provided T-shirts, hats, water bottles and an informational pamphlet about KNM and a website to access a letter of support for them to sign.

Normally, Virgil Smith would be the only member attending, but because we were the hosts it was felt as many as possible be present.

What we learned at the meeting was.

1. A funding source for “Source Solar Water Panels” – Ms. Rosa Long (Vice President Cocopah tribe) attested to the benefits of these. She saw it being useful for those remote places lacking a continuous water source. Water is generated by a non-network, stand-alone solar panel that utilizes moisture from the air and generates five gallons of water a day. Cocopah is utilizing the units at some households on their reservation. Also, this technology has been successful in Africa and India. For more information go to <https://www.source.co/hydropanel/>
2. Arizona Department of Water Resources is working on a plan to deal with evaporation losses (forming a “Ground Water Committee). Briefly, it is a way to reduce water allocation. Our water attorney Jay Weiner is keeping us informed. Our Water Rights are not included in the evaporation study. A committee is being formed for this study. Arizona Governor Hobbs includes tribes as part of these committee.
3. It was noted about “Sacred Waters Conference - A Global Gathering of Indigenous Voices” will take place March 12 – 13, 2024 at Isleta Resort and Casino Hotel near Albuquerque, New Mexico by Redstar International.
4. It was noted that only was it Valentine’s Day it was Arizona Statehood Day, too.
5. Each member tribe of TTP was given a chance to voice concerns or express information pertinent to their tribe.
6. Ute Mountain Chairman Hart was a speaker before Congress “Tribal Access to Clean Water.”

7. Jicarilla Apache Nation used monies for Access to Clean Water to install fire hydrants. We will be looking into that for our reservation. Also, they have put in a pipeline to deliver water to the southern part of their reservation,
8. Southern Ute is dealing with years of neglect in their water delivery system.
9. Navajo Nation is working on promised water rights two in New Mexico and one in Arizona.
10. Ute Indian Tribe working on domestic water lines.
11. Cocopah - revenue sharing day for them. Ms. Long spoke about CRUWA (Colorado River Users Water Association).
12. Quechan – Virgil describes the work being done by Frank Venegas (our Water Technician) to update canals and develop water conservation on the reservation. Then Donald Medart Jr. spoke about KNM.
13. Commissioner Touton (Bureau of Reclamation) spoke virtually while members of the Bureau were present. The Bureau of Reclamation gave a Hydrology Update of Lake Mead and Lake Powell, spoke about the draft SEIS that will be coming out in March. These will eventually be the Post 2026 Operational guidelines.
14. Ms. Long also wants members to find some common grounds and create a list of negotiating principles for Post 2026 discussions to find areas of agreement identify conflicting interests and build mutual support where possible.

Tribal Operations

Thank you to so many tribal members who have expressed concern and hope for both President Joaquin and Vice-President Hall as they both continue to recover. A statement was posted February 16th on the Quechan Tribal Website regarding the absence of the two principals and the Delegation of Authority given to Councilman Virgil Smith during their absence. On February 26th Vice President issued a statement regarding her health again on the Tribal Website.

Council Member Smith has been given Delegation of Authority in the past (during the pandemic) while at the same time acting as the Director of Finance, Social Services, and multiple other departments. He has the experience of getting the day-to-day operations of the tribe done in a smooth and timely manner. Council Member Smith along with Council members Jonathan Koteen, Zion White, Donald Medart Jr., and Gloria McGee discuss various situations and concerns brought forward then come to a consensus through a vote. Our government continues to move forward.

In addition to concerns and situations Tribal Council continues to participates in meetings with the Cultural Committee, Senators and Representatives from both the state and federal level regarding Kwatsaan National Monument, Virtual meetings with NGO's, our Water Attorney Jay Weiner regarding our water rights and possible grants for water infrastructure, meetings with different Department Heads on the reservation, taking care of emergency situations, meeting with Casino Management, addressing concerns of the

elderly, participating in events as they occur, working on job descriptions, and business as usual.

We as a Tribal Council take our oath of office with deep conviction and work in unison to collectively run our government. It is not a one-man operation. We support each other and work to keep our government running without a glitch.