



To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of Friends of the Inyo, I write this letter in support of the Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a Tribe's funding proposal for the acquisition of a 160 acre private parcel east of Yosemite National Park and west of Mono Lake, CA. Friends of the Inyo is a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1986 whose mission is to protect and care for the lands and waters of the Eastern Sierra; we stand in solidarity with the work the Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a are doing to advocate for the lands and water of their traditional homelands. Preserving the Tribe's cultural heritage goes hand in hand with stewardship of the land via traditional practices, which provides a host of benefits for the ecosystem and surrounding communities.

The Tribe's plans for a Tribally Led Conservation Crew (TLCC) will provide jobs and educational experiences for community members. The Tribe's plans to use the existing structures as a seasonal operation base to house the TLCC will allow on-site stewards to monitor the area while working toward restoring landscape resilience to climate change impacts using traditional stewardship practices. In addition to improving local climate change resiliency through stewardship, the TLCC will be critical for ensuring that more local young adults, especially of the Tribe, have the opportunity, in the forms of jobs, and means, in the form of local housing, to continue to live in this area and steward their homelands. This will help build up the next generation of Eastern Sierra environmentalists with the tools and knowledge needed to advocate for and manage these lands in a changing climate.

As an organization dedicated to the health and integrity of Eastern Sierra lands, Friends of the Inyo also supports the work the TLCC will do to maintain roads and trails for public access and enjoyment of the scenic area, with education programs in place for responsible use. This acquisition and the associated space would further benefit the surrounding communities with recreational opportunities led through an indigenous lens. This is critical to help educate the recreation community in the Eastern Sierra, composed of both residents and tourists, as the outdoor industry continues to expand and tourism to Mono County increases year by year, generating adverse impacts to the land, wildlife, and communities.

The Tribe, although a major stakeholder in the area recognized by ourselves and local federal agencies, is currently not federally recognized and is landless. Without a land base, the Tribe has nowhere to conduct ceremonies, which puts traditional experiences and knowledge at risk. Returning this land, which was taken from the Kootzaduka'a, is not only a matter of righting past wrongs— it is also an opportunity to strengthen community with places to gather, host events, provide educational and cultural exchange, and apply traditional stewardship to these lands, for the future generations of the Eastern Sierra, be they human, plant, or animal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Allison Weber'.

Allison Weber, Policy Associate, Forest and Water Campaign Manager

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