



Department of History  
1156 High Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
mrizzo@ucsc.edu

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my concern over the proposed development of the Sargent Quarry Project. This region has been historically known as *Juristac*, and is a site of cultural, spiritual, and social significance for the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. According to the historical record and Ed Ketchum, Amah Mutsun Tribal Historian, it is one of very few remaining undeveloped sacred sites in the region. I am a historian whose research and writing has focused on the history of Indigenous peoples of the Monterey Bay region, and I urge you to reconsider the proposed development. This is an opportunity to do right by the people who have called this land home for thousands of years, a rare opportunity to forge a better and more respectful relationship with the Amah Mutsun, who have already witnessed the vast majority of their sacred sites and homelands developed and destroyed.

The proposed development of 320 acres of present-day Sargent Ranch property into an extractive sand and gravel mining operation will undoubtedly destroy *Juristac*. This site has a long cultural history spanning thousands of years. It was home to multiple Mutsun villages, who fought to defend these lands and their resources against Spanish soldiers in the early 1800s. *Juristac* also served as the location of the sacred Kuksui ceremony, or Big Head Dance. This important ceremony served as a means of spiritual and social cohesion, drawing spiritual leaders from throughout the greater region into ceremony together. The Kuksui ceremony helped to bridge local tribes in social and spiritual community. *Juristac* is one of very few sacred Kuksui sites, and quite possibly the last undeveloped Kuksui site in the region. Ethnographers in the early 1900's such as John P. Harrington and John Aldon Mason documented that the Kuksui ceremony continued to serve as an important part in the lives of the ancestors of the Amah Mutsun people into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the mission period, around 90% of the local Indigenous population died from disease and poor treatment at the hands of the missionaries and settlers. Following the closing of Mission San Juan Bautista around 1840, the Sargent Ranch property was home to four villages of mission survivors – including the ancestors of the Amah Mutsun. *Juristac* continues to hold special significance for the Amah Mutsun today. *Juristac* is a place of great significance, helping to connect contemporary Amah Mutsun to their ancestors, and strengthen their ties to their traditions.

It is for these reasons that I urge you to follow both ethical and legal mandates and work directly and collaboratively with the Amah Mutsun to find ways to preserve *Juristac* and to provide avenues for them to access and tend to this most sacred site, both now and into

the future. This is a rare opportunity to do right by the people who have called these beautiful lands home for over ten thousand years, and whose ancestors have carefully tended these landscape for generations. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Rizzo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "R".

Dr. Martin Rizzo, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professor, History – at UC Santa Cruz, Cabrillo College, and Salinas Valley State Prison (through Hartnell College)