



California Institute of Integral Studies

Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors
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Supervisor Cindy Chavez, District 2
Supervisor Dave Cortese, District 3
Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, District 4
Supervisor Joe Simitian, District 5

Santa Clara County Planning Commission
planning.commission@pln.sccgov.org

Cc: info@protectjuristac.org

Re: Protect Juristac sacred site/ Opposition to the Sargent Quarry Project on the Sargent Ranch parcel

April 24, 2020

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors and Santa Clara County Planning Commission:

We are writing to express serious concerns about the Sargent Quarry Project, proposed for the Sargent Ranch parcel. This project – a 320-acre open pit sand and gravel mine – is being proposed for land sacred to the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. The proposed project threatens the cultural and spiritual integrity of the Amah Mutsun, as well as the ecological quality of valuable open space, for relatively short-term economic return. The project should be rejected.

In a time when the Bay Area is increasingly crowded and overbuilt, and spiritual and ecological inspiration is increasingly difficult to find, we must preserve those sites that support important cultural, spiritual, and ecological values.

The proposed project would desecrate the sacred site known as Juristac, which is understood to be the home of a powerful spiritual being. Spiritual ceremonies and dances have been conducted in this area for millennia, imbuing the landscape with power and sanctity. In a just and inclusive society, it is essential to respect diverse values and traditions. Just as it would be offensive to destroy a church to make way for a gravel mine, it would be equally offensive to destroy this sacred site for an open-pit mine.

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Protecting Juristac will support and contribute to the cultural renewal of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, while protecting important ecological habitat. Scientific research around the world has shown that Native, Indigenous, and Aboriginal peoples are often the best ecological stewards with their lands preserving important biodiversity and ecosystems functions that support all of human life. The recently released Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report on the state of the world's biodiversity finds that nature is better preserved on lands owned or managed by Indigenous peoples than on other lands. Thus, we must listen when Indigenous people tell us that it is necessary to preserve and protect particular sites. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band is advocating for their sacred site, the preservation of which will also preserve important open space and ecological habitat.

In addition to being a sacred site, the lands of Juristac provide important habitat – grasslands, oak woodland, riparian corridors, freshwater ponds and streams – for an abundance of species including the California tiger salamander and the California red-legged frog, both federally-listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. In addition, the lands provide habitat for badger, mountain lions, burrowing owls, among other species. In a mosaic of paved and developed land, it is increasingly important to maintain wildlife corridors that allow wild species to move between habitats for food, shelter, and breeding. Maintaining this parcel as open, natural land will provide an important wildlife corridor for wild species, such as pumas, moving between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo and Gabilan mountain ranges to the south.

We encourage you to reject the application for this project. Instead, we must protect and preserve Juristac, the sacred site, and recognize that Mutsun spirituality is equal to other religions of the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Allison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth Allison, PhD
Associate Professor of Ecology and Religion
Founder and Chair, Ecology, Spirituality, and Religion graduate program
eallison@ciis.edu
415-575-3482



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Michelle Glowa, PhD
Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Social Change
mglowa@ciis.edu
301-908-0641

Targol Mesbah, PhD
Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Social Change
tmebah@ciis.edu
415-575-3412

Judie Wexler, PhD, President of CIIS
Ellen Durst, Director of Admissions
Chip B. Goldstein, EdD, Associate Provost

Alka Arora, PhD, Associate Professor, Women's Spirituality
Craig Chalquist, PhD, Professor, California Institute of Integral Studies
Jocelyn Chapman, PhD, Director, Transformative Inquiry Dept.
Gabrielle Esensten, MA student, Women, Gender, Spirituality and Social Justice Program
Kris Malone Grossman, MFA & Doctoral Student, Women's Spirituality
Chantal Forbes, MA, Program Coordinator, Department of Anthropology and Social Change
Heidi Fraser Hageman, PhD, Director of the CIIS Center for Writing and Scholarship
Sarah Heady, Senior Grants Writer
Sean Kelly, PhD, Professor of Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness
Ryan Kozisek, Admissions Counselor, ACTCM @ CIIS
Ishtar Kramer, MA, Core Faculty, East-West Psychology
Dr. Natalie Metz, ND, MA, Core Faculty, Integrative Health Studies
Monica Mody, PhD, Adjunct Lecturer, California Institute of Integral Studies
Patricia Pforte, Senior Marketing Manager for CIIS Public Programs
Laura Pustarfi, PhD, Center Manager, The Center for Psychedelic Therapies and Research
Gary M. Raucher, LMFT, RDT/BCT, Assoc. Professor, MA Counseling Psychology Program
Charlotte María Sáenz, Core Faculty, School of Undergraduate Studies
Kelly Sundin, MLIS, Library Director, Laurance S. Rockefeller Library
Deirdre Visser, Curator, The Arts at CIIS
Annette Williams, PhD, Chair and Assistant Professor, Women's Spirituality and Women,
Gender, Spirituality and Social Justice

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