



Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe Proposes New National Monument in California

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YUMA, AZ (February 1, 2024) – The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe today announced an effort to establish the Kw'tsán National Monument, calling on President Biden to protect more than 390,000 acres of the Tribe's homelands located in Imperial County, California. These lands, currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, contain incredible cultural, ecological, recreational, scenic, and historic values that the Tribe is asking be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

"As original stewards of this land, we are asking President Biden to take action to protect this important and sacred landscape by designating it as the Kw'tsán National Monument," said **Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe President Jordan Joaquin**. "As others see the land as just land and dirt, we, the Quechan people, see the land in our DNA. We come from the air, the water, the land. It's who we are, and protecting these lands preserves our past while safeguarding our future."

The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe and the Quechan people remain committed to the preservation of its cultural values, belief systems, life ways, traditional practices, and the sovereign legal rights of Native American people. The Tribal Council is requesting that the Biden Administration designate this new monument through the Antiquities Act, and establish an inter-governmental stewardship agreement between the Tribe and federal agencies. This would mean that Quechan values, knowledge, expertise, and worldviews will be incorporated into the new monument management plan so that ceremonies, cultural activities, and gatherings within the protected area could continue.

"We need to protect our culture, heritage, traditions and our language. The trails that are encompassed within this area connect us back to the spirit world. It's important for us to be able to go back into the desert and to show future generations who we are. To see our footprints in the desert reconnects us with who we are as the Quechan people. This effort is bringing the Quechan community together to protect this sacred place," said **Kw'tsán Cultural Committee Chairman Manfred Scott**.

The proposed national monument is part of a greater cultural landscape, connecting Avi Kwa Lal, Palo Verde Peak, the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, and Spirit Mountain in Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. The proposed boundary incorporates the Indian Pass Area of Critical

Environmental Concern (ACEC) Pilot Knob (Avikwalal), Singer Geoglyphs (ACEC), Buzzards Peak, and Picacho Peak Wilderness areas.

“The Kw’tsán National Monument is directly adjacent to our reservation but encompasses the heart of our aboriginal homelands,” said **Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe Council Member Donald W. Medart, Jr.** “This national monument will protect the trails, desert life, petroglyphs, geoglyphs, and lithics that we have in our surrounding desert. The Quechan people have been in this area since time immemorial, and we intend to protect these lands until the end of time.”

A national monument would provide protections for wildlife, cultural places, sacred sites, scenic features and other conservation values and would also prevent new harmful activities, including new mining claims and large industrial development within its boundaries.

For additional information, visit ProtectKwtsan.org.

B-roll of the landscape available [here](#).

Photos of the proposed monument available [here](#). Please credit “Courtesy of Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe/Bob Wick.”

[Link](#) to this press release on the web.

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About Protect Kw’tsán National Monument Campaign:

The Kw’tsán National Monument (KNM) campaign’s purpose and mission is to provide permanent protection for the homelands, cultural objects, and sacred places of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe and its people, that are increasingly threatened by mining exploration, natural resource extraction, harmful development, unregulated recreational use, management inadequacies, and climate change. The goal of the campaign is to encourage and invoke action by President Biden to stand with the Tribe and its people and designate the Kw’tsán National Monument. The proposed Kw’tsán National Monument (KNM) encompasses more than 390,000 acres of lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The boundary exhibits a portion of our ancestral homelands and incorporates the Indian Pass Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Pilot Knob (Avikwalal), Singer Geoglyphs (ACEC), Buzzards Peak, and Picacho Peak Wilderness areas.

About the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe: *The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe is a federally recognized Tribal Nation with more than 3,200 Tribal citizens and 45,000 acres of reservation land, located along both sides of the Colorado River in Imperial County, CA and Yuma County, AZ. The reservation borders the states of Arizona, California, and Baja California, Mexico and is home to the Quechan people, or Kwatsaan, meaning those who descended. To learn more about the Quechan people and the Tribe’s history, please visit: <https://www.quechantribe.com/about-us.html>.*