

Yurok Tribe requests the California State Parks and Recreation Commission to formally change Patrick's Point State Park to Sue-meg State Park

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Sue-meg Village is located within the ancestral lands of the Yurok Tribe on the northern coast of California in Humboldt County, 26 miles north of Eureka and 46 miles south of Crescent City. In addition to stunning landscape of the California Coast, the park includes Sue-meg Village which was planned and built by Yurok people and dedicated in 1990.

The village of Sue-meg holds significant cultural meaning to Yurok people and includes a ceremonial site that is actively used by contemporary Yurok People. Yurok People have called this portion of the California Northwest Coast home since time immemorial. Through attempted colonization and genocide after the California Gold Rush, many areas that are now known as state parks are no longer in Yurok ownership though contemporary descendants still hold these places as sacred and call them home. The Tribe's relationship to this land is deep and has continued for generations.

There has been momentum in the state of California to acknowledge some of the wrongdoings of the past and to work with Native people to move to a better partnership. The governor's apology for the State of California's role in the attempted colonization and genocide of Native people is the first step in creating a true partnership with our State agencies. We now look to the future to help our Tribal people and the state heal from some of the past wrongdoings. If the California State Parks and Recreation Commission approves the name change, it would be the first park name change in the State.

"The Yurok Tribe applauds California State Parks and North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent Victor Bjelajac, specifically, for working to correct this historic wrong. We fully support the renaming of Patrick's Point State Park to Sue-meg State Park. It is no longer acceptable to name important places after murderers of indigenous people. We ask the community to accept the name change because it will ensure the next generation inherits a more just world," said Joseph L. James, the chairman of the Yurok Tribe

Patrick's Point State Park is named after the westernmost promontory on the peninsula in which it sits. The promontory, "Patrick's Point," is named after Patrick Beegan who held a "claim" near the area in the 1850s during the California Gold Rush. Beegan was a part of a culture and group of people who held no remorse for the killing of Yurok People, in fact he was known to have murdered a young Yurok boy in the Chue-rey (Tsurai) area. We acknowledge that this boy and the other Native people he murdered will never fully get their justice. At the minimum we can stop honoring a known participant in the attempted genocide of Yurok people and rename the park to reflect the deeper history of the land.

"We have long known that Patrick Beegan was one of many colonizers who participated in massacres of Native American people, including women and children. I would like to thank the California State Parks North Coast Redwoods District for addressing this injustice and using the place name Sue-meg a name used since time immemorial. The proposed name change represents a positive step in the right direction," said Rosie Clayburn, Yurok Tribal heritage preservation officer.

The dark past of the state is present all over our landscape including many other namesakes such as this; but this landscape also hold the Tribe's genesis, history, religion and the story of peoples' resilience. These are the stories that warrant recognition and are things that have been here since the beginning of the world and will continue into the future.

The California State Park and Recreation Commission has jurisdiction over the naming of units of the State Parks System. California State Parks is recommending that the commission approve the changing of Patrick's Point State Park name to Sue-meg State Park at the Thursday, Sept. 30, meeting. Public feedback on this potential name change will be **accepted through Tuesday, Sept. 28**. Written comments may be emailed to planning@parks.ca.gov with the words "Patrick's Point Name Change" in the subject line. There will also be a time for public member comment at the commission meeting.

