



## QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

*Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation*

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## Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe and Kw'tsán Cultural Committee Sign a Co-Stewardship Agreement with Bureau of Land Management

### CONTACT

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**WASHINGTON, DC (January 15, 2025)** – The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe (FYQIT) today announced that it entered into co-stewardship of the Quechan Ancestral Landscapes with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management California Desert District Office (BLM). This agreement is intended to establish and memorialize processes between FYQIT and BLM on how each party will plan, resource, share expertise, services, not otherwise available during the resource management and land management planning of areas located within the traditional Tribal territory of the Quechan people.

The Tribe's homelands are located in Imperial County, California. These lands, currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management, contain incredible cultural, ecological, recreational, scenic, and historic values. Last year, the FYQIT launched a public campaign asking President Joe Biden to designate this area as a national monument so it could be preserved for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

“As a Tribe, we believe this is a great step forward in how we are able to engage with the agency about a landscape that holds so much of our history,” said **Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe President Jordan Joaquin**. “We take seriously the responsibility we have as the original stewards. And we look forward to implementation of this agreement which we believe will strengthen land management effectiveness, enhance natural and cultural resource protection, and facilitate Tribal involvement in management and implementation decisions.”

The Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe partners closely with its appointed officials within the Cultural Committee to ensure that it is accountable to the preservation of its cultural values, belief systems, life ways, and traditional practices. **Kw'tsán Cultural Committee Chairman Manfred Scott** says that the agreement is long-awaited and that his Committee is ready to engage in ways that protect what is sacred to the Tribe. “As the Chair for the Kw'tsán Cultural Committee (KCC) it brings me great joy to see all the Tribal support and solidarity - our unity around protection of this landscape goes to show what can be accomplished. I've been doing the work for more than 40 years and I feel that we are finally at a place where we are seen and

heard. This co-stewardship agreement came together in under ten days and today, the KCC were happy to, on behalf of Quechan Tribal Council, witness one of BLM Principal Deputy Director Nada Wolff Culver's last moments in her position. The ink is dry and now we can move forward to the next phase of getting a bill passed within the next year and a half. Today's a great day to be Kwatsan!"

The Quechan Ancestral Landscapes are part of a greater cultural landscape, connecting Avi Kwa Lal, Palo Verde Peak, the newly designated Chuckwalla National Monument, and Spirit Mountain in Avi Kwa Ame National Monument, which was designated by President Biden in 2023. The ancestral landscape boundary incorporates the Indian Pass Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Pilot Knob (Avikwalal), Singer Geoglyphs (ACEC), Buzzards Peak, and Picacho Peak Wilderness areas.

Key outcomes of co-stewardship would be to 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](https://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."

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**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>.*

**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.*