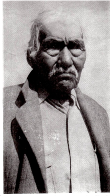
Journal #5464 from sdc 5.19.23

Yosemite Finally Reckons with Its Discriminatory Past

Pioneers, the government, even John Muir helped kick out Native Americans from their homes on national parks. But in Yosemite, the Miwuk Tribe is getting its village back.

Jake Bullinger **Aug 23, 2018**

In 1977, Yosemite National Park employees Jay Johnson and Les James had an unusual request: They wanted their employer to rebuild the homes that park staff had destroyed eight years prior. This was more than a pitch for employee housing. Johnson and James are Miwuk, and their George Hansen ancestors inhabited the Yosemite Valley—or the Ahwahnee Valley, as it was originally known—for thousands of years. Even after Yosemite was designated a national park in 1890, about 15 families continued living in their homes on the land.



Bah-vanda-sava-nu-kee. The whites have given him the name Indian George Hansen.

The small village housed mostly Miwuk and Paiute Native Americans who also worked in the park. Their homes were seen as employee lodging, so the Park Service allowed the buildings to remain. But as the majority of Native residents stopped working for the park or its concessionaires, Yosemite staff decided to raze the village in 1969, forcing people out of their ancestral homes. "During that time, we had no voice. We were just individuals, and we were always afraid of what the government could do to us," says James, 83. "They could fire us or throw us out for any kind of reason, and we were always afraid of that."

A year after the village was leveled, some of the local Miwuk founded the American Indian Council of Mariposa County. (The Southern Sierra band of Miwuks, descendants of Yosemite's original inhabitants, lacks federal recognition.) In 1977, with the council's backing, James and Johnson requested their village be returned. "Since that time, we've been working on it," James says.

After decades of negotiations, a breakthrough was made this summer. An agreement struck with the park guarantees Southern Sierra Miwuks greater access to their homeland and to cultural practices that were upended almost 170 years ago.

"We always felt that what was available to our ancestors should've been available to us."

The first white settlers to enter Yosemite Valley were led in 1851 by a gold-rush merchant named James Savage. During a conflict between Native Americans and miners, Savage's trading post was attacked, and he led a group of men into the Valley for revenge, hanging some members of the Ahwahneechee Tribe, one of four Native groups in the Miwuk family, and shooting a chief's son in the back. After Savage's attack, most of the Ahwahneechee ended up on a reservation in the San Joaquin Valley, although a small band remained in Yosemite.

It was into this vacuum that famed naturalist John Muir emerged. He, too, had little care for the indigenous population. While waxing poetic about the Valley's ecology and geology, Muir found its residents "most ugly, and some of them altogether hideous."

Muir's people-free preservation ideal eventually became national park policy. And as America's greatest idea caught on, the National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs would together separate Native Americans from landscapes they cherished. As 19th-century Oglala Sioux luminary Black Elk noted, the agencies "made little islands for us and other little islands for the [animals]" with the simultaneous establishment of reservations and national parks.

The narrative put forth by the Park Service has always been one of Native acquiescence, though in reality, historian Philip Burnham writes, that was far from the truth. For instance, the Ute Mountain Utes didn't willingly swap reservation land to expand Mesa Verde National Park in 1911. Rather, the feds threatened to withhold appropriations. The Blackfeet Tribe sold the western portion of its reservation, which would later be added to Glacier National Park, to the United States in 1895 only after a severe winter had starved many of its members.

"The idea that these parks were 'gifted' by Indians or other owners, a myth born in the era of later philanthropists such as John D. Rockefeller, was anything but true for Native people," Burnham wrote in an email.

While Native Americans were being forced off the land in national parks across the country, in Yosemite, James' and Johnson's ancestors remained—even becoming integral pieces of the Yosemite economy. From the park's earliest days, the small band of local Native Americans served as laborers and attractions. The park held annual Indian Field Days, during which park administrators would dress locals in Plains Indian regalia to perform before tourists. A replica village was built in the park, but Miwuk people still had to ask permission to use it.

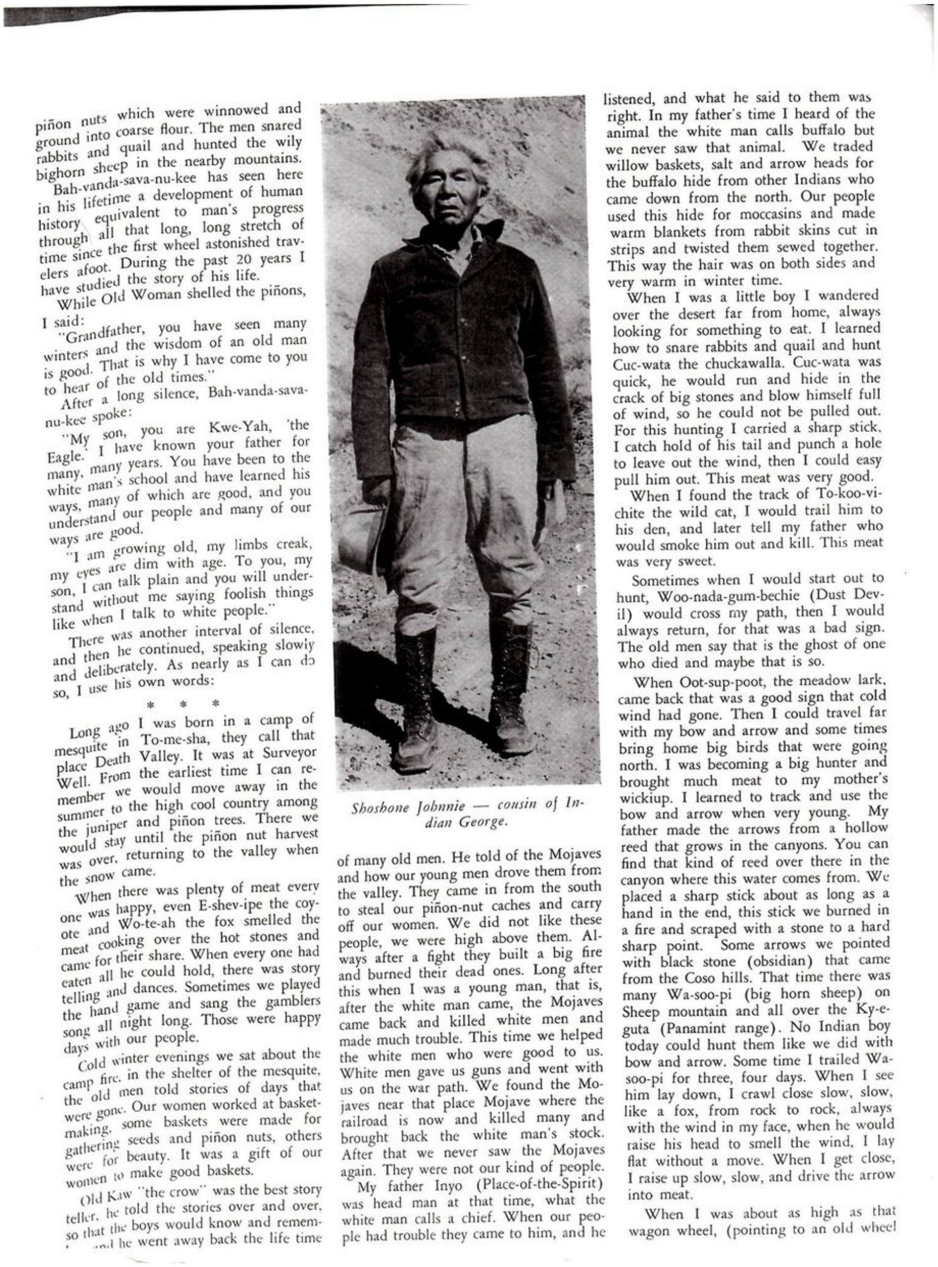
"This is about our survival."

For decades, Johnson, James, and other Miwuk members had been negotiating the return of their village, always running into problems with politics or leadership change. The first agreement was struck in 2008, but that plan was derailed when then-superintendent Don Neubacher said the indigenous construction methods would pose a liability. Then, this June, the Miwuk gained a powerful ally. Michael Reynolds became the park's new superintendent. Shortly after arriving in his post, Reynolds signed a 30-year agreement that would allow the local American Indian Council of Mariposa County to build and use a wahhoga, the Miwuk word for village. A roundhouse is scheduled to be completed in 2019, and multiple umachas—lodges sheathed in cedar bark—will be built as well. The buildings will be constructed using traditional methods and materials and will serve as a focal point for Native American cultural and religious ceremonies.

Announcing the latest agreement, Reynolds, who grew up near Yosemite, struck a reparative tone. "I, along with many, often struggle to find a better and more complete understanding of the difficulties that our people have caused to the lives and cultures of the Native peoples of this land," he said in a video of the event posted by the *Fresno Bee*. "Perhaps today we are restarting this conversation."

Though nobody will live in the wahhoga, the agreement is nonetheless a watershed moment in the park's relationship with local Native Americans, who have long sought to reestablish their cultural and subsistence connection with the park. The wahhoga could also function as an example for other NPS units, nearly all of which were created following forcible or coerced removal of the Native population. "Our ancestors used to live there, and we always felt that what was available to our ancestors should've been available to us," James says.

James, who chairs the Wahhoga Committee, sees this as one more step toward indigenous tribes reconnecting with their ancestral homeland. Next on the docket, he plans to start programs that teach Native youth about traditional plant and animal harvesting. As James says, “This is about our survival.”



piñon nuts which were winnowed and ground into coarse flour. The men snared rabbits and quail and hunted the wily bighorn sheep in the nearby mountains.

Bah-vanda-sava-nu-kee has seen here in his lifetime a development of human history equivalent to man's progress through all that long, long stretch of time since the first wheel astonished travelers afoot. During the past 20 years I have studied the story of his life.

While Old Woman shelled the piñons, I said:

"Grandfather, you have seen many winters and the wisdom of an old man is good. That is why I have come to you to hear of the old times."

After a long silence, Bah-vanda-sava-nu-kee spoke:

"My son, you are Kwe-Yah, 'the Eagle.' I have known your father for many, many years. You have been to the white man's school and have learned his ways, many of which are good, and you understand our people and many of our ways are good.

"I am growing old, my limbs creak, my eyes are dim with age. To you, my son, I can talk plain and you will understand without me saying foolish things like when I talk to white people."

There was another interval of silence, and then he continued, speaking slowly and deliberately. As nearly as I can do so, I use his own words:

* * *

Long ago I was born in a camp of mesquite in To-me-sha, they call that place Death Valley. It was at Surveyor Well. From the earliest time I can remember we would move away in the summer to the high cool country among the juniper and piñon trees. There we would stay until the piñon nut harvest was over, returning to the valley when the snow came.

When there was plenty of meat every one was happy, even E-shev-ipe the coyote and Wo-te-ah the fox smelled the meat cooking over the hot stones and came for their share. When every one had eaten all he could hold, there was story telling and dances. Sometimes we played the hand game and sang the gamblers song all night long. Those were happy days with our people.

Cold winter evenings we sat about the camp fire, in the shelter of the mesquite, the old men told stories of days that were gone. Our women worked at basket-making, some baskets were made for gathering seeds and piñon nuts, others were for beauty. It was a gift of our women to make good baskets.

Old Kaw "the crow" was the best story teller, he told the stories over and over, so that the boys would know and remem- [illegible] he went away back the life time of many old men. He told of the Mojaves and how our young men drove them from the valley. They came in from the south to steal our piñon-nut caches and carry off our women. We did not like these people, we were high above them. Always after a fight they built a big fire and burned their dead ones. Long after this when I was a young man, that is, after the white man came, the Mojaves came back and killed white men and made much trouble. This time we helped the white men who were good to us. White men gave us guns and went with us on the war path. We found the Mojaves near that place Mojave where the railroad is now and killed many and brought back the white man's stock. After that we never saw the Mojaves again. They were not our kind of people.

Shoshone Johnnie — cousin of Indian George.

My father Inyo (Place-of-the-Spirit) was head man at that time, what the white man calls a chief. When our people had trouble they came to him, and he listened, and what he said to them was right. In my father's time I heard of the animal the white man calls buffalo but we never saw that animal. We traded willow baskets, salt and arrow heads for the buffalo hide from other Indians who came down from the north. Our people used this hide for moccasins and made warm blankets from rabbit skins cut in strips and twisted them sewed together. This way the hair was on both sides and very warm in winter time.

When I was a little boy I wandered over the desert far from home, always looking for something to eat. I learned how to snare rabbits and quail and hunt Cuc-wata the chuckawalla. Cuc-wata was quick, he would run and hide in the crack of big stones and blow himself full of wind, so he could not be pulled out. For this hunting I carried a sharp stick, I catch hold of his tail and punch a hole to leave out the wind, then I could easy pull him out. This meat was very good.

When I found the track of To-koo-vi-chite the wild cat, I would trail him to his den, and later tell my father who would smoke him out and kill. This meat was very sweet.

Sometimes when I would start out to hunt, Woo-nada-gum-bechie (Dust Devil) would cross my path, then I would always return, for that was a bad sign. The old men say that is the ghost of one who died and maybe that is so.

When Oot-sup-poot, the meadow lark, came back that was a good sign that cold wind had gone. Then I could travel far with my bow and arrow and some times bring home big birds that were going north. I was becoming a big hunter and brought much meat to my mother's wickiup. I learned to track and use the bow and arrow when very young. My father made the arrows from a hollow reed that grows in the canyons. You can find that kind of reed over there in the canyon where this water comes from. We placed a sharp stick about as long as a hand in the end, this stick we burned in a fire and scraped with a stone to a hard sharp point. Some arrows we pointed with black stone (obsidian) that came from the Coso hills. That time there was many Wa-soo-pi (big horn sheep) on Sheep mountain and all over the Ky-e-guta (Panamint range). No Indian boy today could hunt them like we did with bow and arrow. Some time I trailed Wa-soo-pi for three, four days. When I see him lay down, I crawl close slow, slow, like a fox, from rock to rock, always with the wind in my face, when he would raise his head to smell the wind, I lay flat without a move. When I get close, I raise up slow, slow, and drive the arrow into meat.

When I was about as high as that wagon wheel, (pointing to an old wheel

to enlarge, drag from lower right hand corner

There were female warriors

In the movies, male Native American warriors rode off to battle while their female counterparts remained behind to cook, sew, and take care of the camp. In real life, this wasn't always the case. Many warrior Native American women fought alongside men. The most famous of these was probably Buffalo Calf Road Woman, a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe who fought in the Battle of the Rosebud and the Battle of Little Bighorn. In fact, according to the elders of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, it was she who dealt Custer his final deadly blow. Buffalo Calf Road Woman is just one of many incredible women you didn't read about in history class.

The American Fisheries Society (AFS) recognizes the need to elevate tribal voices and experiences in the fisheries profession. To support tribal students and early career professionals, AFS is offering sponsorships to attend our annual meeting August 20-25, 2023 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This will provide opportunities for tribal college students and early career professionals to attend a national fisheries conference, meet peers and other professionals, attend sponsored events, and broaden their horizons. (More Information found HERE).

The meeting program has the theme "Adaptive approaches to understand and manage changes in fisheries," and features sessions on topics relevant to tribal fisheries professionals and Indigenous fisheries students and professionals. In addition, AFS will be hosting a tribal specific networking breakfast on August 21st for travel award recipients, tribal fisheries professionals, and AFS leadership.

\This opportunity will completely cover registration costs for selected participants. Additionally, AFS will attempt to cover other meeting related costs, including rooms, meals, and travel on an as needed basis.

Interested participants should apply online HERE under the Indigenous Outreach Travel Award. The application deadline is Sunday, June 10, 2023. Please contact Ashley Berniche at aberniche@fisheries.org with any questions.

In closing, this offer is an important step to support tribal students and early career professionals toward a career in fisheries. AFS is proactively developing opportunities to engage and include tribal members at our annual, international, and regional meetings. These activities will benefit all of our efforts to provide sustainable fisheries resources for the future.

Respectfully, Ashley Berniche American Fisheries Society

‘Six times the size of Yosemite’: the new tribal sanctuary off the super-rich LA coast

Viewed by the Chumash people as their ancestral home, the Native American tribe is behind the first Indigenous-led initiative to protect the ocean and repair its damaged ecosystem
Read in The Guardian: https://apple.news/ACHwVLIFkRdCwq_f8NY_CLQ

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Australia’s Newest National Park Is Home to 550 Million-Year-Old Fossils: Take a Look

https://nicenews.com/environment/nilpena-ediacara-national-park-australia

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Giant Study Identifies Dominant Force Driving Evolution on Earth Today

https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/giant-study-identifies-dominant-force-driving-evolution-on-earth-today/ar-AA1bnWgO?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531&cvid=8feeb301dec34903a4eeb644ec581898&ei=67

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Reuters

Biden admin supports Mountain Valley Pipeline for second time in week

The Biden administration has supported for the second time in a week the Mountain Valley natural gas pipeline, a project a key Democratic senator has pushed in legislation to speed permitting of fossil fuel and power transmission projects. Equitrans Midstream Corp's $6.6 billion Mountain Valley Pipeline has been opposed by environmental activists, but has won the backing of Biden administration officials, including Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm.

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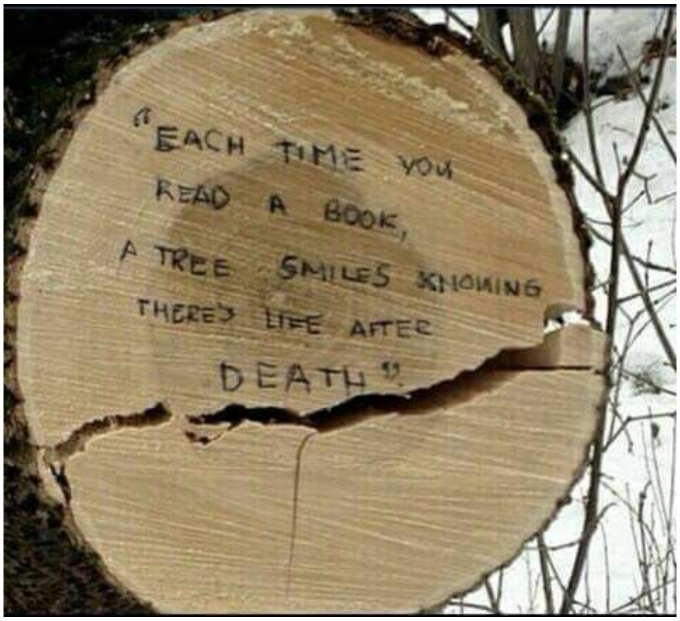
EU countries adopt law banning products which fuel deforestation



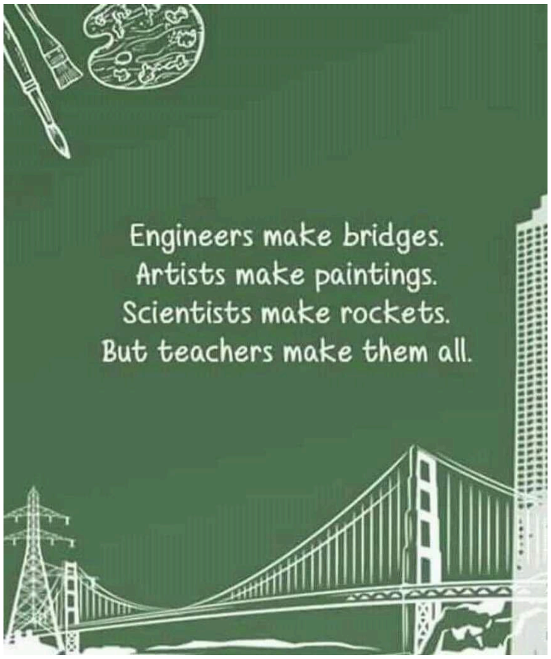
Upcoming HUD Tribal Consultations on BABA – June 7 and July 11, 2023

HUD is hosting two in-person Tribal consultation sessions with Tribes and TDHEs to better understand the impact that Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements will have on future infrastructure development in Tribal communities.

- The first consultation session will be held at the National Congress of American Indians Mid-Year session at 3pm on **June 7, 2023** in Prior Lake, Minnesota.
- The second consultation session will be held at the Southern Plains Indian Housing Association on **July 11, 2023** in Durant, Oklahoma.

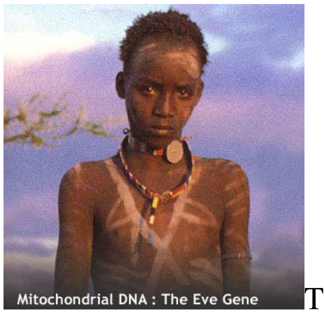
More dates and locations will be announced as they are confirmed.
Questions to consider:

- What are the impacts of BABA on construction and infrastructure development?
- Where do Tribes and TDHEs currently source their iron, steel, construction materials, and manufactured goods?
- Do you have access to viable American suppliers of iron, steel, construction materials, and manufactured goods?
- Do you anticipate that BABA will increase the cost of construction of infrastructure projects?
- Should HUD consider a different de minimis threshold requirement when BABA applies to Tribal infrastructure projects?
- When should HUD begin to require Tribes and TDHEs to comply with BABA requirements?
- Are there other comments you'd like to share, or other issues HUD should consider?



> ***"The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own." – Benjamin Disraeli***

Some of the first humans in the Americas came from China, study finds (Guardian)
https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/may/09/prehistoric-migrations-china-americas



The Waterbury Observer

A decade-long DNA project by National Geographic collected DNA samples from individuals in the jungles of Papau New Guinea, the rolling hills of Tuscany, Brazil, Siberia, China, Ireland, Kenya, Puerto Rico, Iceland, Albania, and every nook and cranny on the planet.

It was the largest and most intensive DNA project ever conducted on the planet and resulted in a startling discovery; every living person on Earth is a direct descendant of one woman who lived in East Africa 150,000 years ago. They named her **Mitochondrial Eve.**

She was a nomad and after many many generations her descendants began to migrate out of Africa and eventually physically adapted to populate every viable ecosystem in the world. The further north her descendants traveled - and after hundreds of generations - their skin and hair lightened. This is known as natural selection, a biological process where a living organism will morph and change to adapt to its environment.

The Observer has shared this information with dozens of our friends and family over the years, and while most are surprised and delighted, for some this scientific discovery is not well received.

"We all come from an East African nomad?" they ask shaking their head.

"Yes."

"And she was black?"

"Yes."

"Well I don't believe that," they'll say.

And in today's world divided by faith and culture and politics and skin color, it is a hard concept to fully embrace - but we are all related - blacks, whites, Asians and Hispanics.

We all come from that one mother in East Africa 150,000 years ago. She may be the biblical Eve, or she may have evolved from primates and Neanderthals. It really doesn't matter if you embrace her in faith, or in science, but by accepting her and learning about human history and how we have adapted in the past 7000 generations we might begin to realize that we literally are one human family. And in that realization we might begin the slow and painful process of reconciliation and learn to accept and embrace our physical differences.

So today, on Mother's Day we salute our mothers, our grandmothers, our great grandmothers, and all the mothers on the path that lead straight back to Mitochondrial Eve, who started our astoundingly diverse family 150,000 years ago.

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International recognition for Indigenous science champion

University Of Waikato

Noted Māori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith has been elected as a lifetime international member of the United States National Academy of Sciences.

Noted Māori academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith has been elected as a lifetime international member of the United States National Academy of Sciences.

Professor Smith, a distinguished professor at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi, was recognised for her transformative contributions to education and Indigenous science methodologies.

The academy says she developed “foundational ways to decolonize the process of science by developing a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values that inform research practices”.

Distinguished Professor Smith says it was was a genuine ‘wow’ moment to be recognised by scientists outside New Zealand for her work in the fields of Indigenous studies, Māori education, social sciences and kaupapa Māori.

The National Academy was established in 1863 through an Act of Congress, signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Since then, approximately 500 current and deceased members have won Nobel Prizes.

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From SBA:You are not too small to go global. International sales opportunities are within reach for small business owners. The overwhelming majority of global consumers live beyond U.S. borders, representing a big opportunity to sell products and services to new markets. Businesses that go global through exporting are more likely to increase their bottom lines, expand their footprints, grow at higher rates, and employ more people. This World Trade Month, SBA invites you to explore the federal programs and resources that are designed to help you not only break into the international marketplace, but also excel once you get there. **Learn more**

By now, you may have already heard about our big news. If you missed it, here is a short recap of what you have to look forward to in less than a month!

For the first time in the National Geographic Society's history, we are thrilled to invite current supporters to the **2023 Explorers Festival livestream taking place between June 14-15**! This is the Society's most important event—a unique program that brings together our global community of intrepid Explorers who stretch their creativity and push the boundaries of traditional thinking in ways that fundamentally change our world.

You will simultaneously support new and on going projects that:

- **Safeguard Critical Species.** All across the planet, the Society is supporting efforts to help protect some of our most threatened wildlife. Join today to help vulnerable species such as elephants, lions, leopards, tigers, ring-tailed lemurs, narwhals, and more.

- **Protect Our Living Planet.** For 135 years, the Society has been at the forefront of using science and exploration to better understand, preserve, and protect our planet. Your Contributing Member support has helped protect more than 6 million square kilometers of ocean through our Pristine Seas project, a bold and innovative effort to explore and protect the wildest places in the ocean before it's too late. Join today to help better understand, preserve, and protect the Earth.

- **Push the Boundaries of Exploration.** A new generation of Explorers are taking on today's questions and critical issues—and they are counting on your support to continue advancing understanding and knowledge.

This year's Explorers Festival is a must-see! During this incredible gathering, you will get to hear from leading scientists, conservationists, educators, and storytellers to collaborate, innovate, and cross-pollinate ideas—advancing our important mission to illuminate and protect the wonder of our world. It will be an opportunity to be connected and inspired. From dynamic presenters covering the complicated history of "exploration" and Explorers discussing the impact of their work, to world-class storytelling with social and behavioral science to drive positive change.

When you make your Contributing Membership gift of $35 or more, you will be part of a truly special convening that has produced some of the most successful partnerships in conservation.

GIVE NOW >

Travel Nevada

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Listen to expert tule duck artisan Mike Williams describe how Nevada's State Artifact is made, and his journey in learning how to master this lost art.

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Janet Davis

Today marks the **163rd Anniversary of the Pyramid Lake Wars of 1860**. These confrontations mark our resistance, our resilience and our victories. Don’t forget the prayer and the Run today, starting below Numana Hatchery.

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Serrell WashoeChairman

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Time for Wasiw-siw to return to Da’ow!

Washoe Elder Steven James led the prayer for our sacred waters this year. Elder’s and Tribal member’s gathered at Meeks Bay Resort to bless themselves, as the spring snow melt marks the time for Washoe people to return to the life giving waters of Lake Tahoe. The blessing has been done by Washoe people since the beginning of time and we strive to keep our traditions alive!