



California Native American Heritage Commission Quarterly Commission Meeting Minutes Open Session

Meeting Date: April 17, 2026

Meeting Time: 10:03 am - 2:47 pm

Meeting Location: Pala Casino Spa & Golf Resort, 11154 CA-76, Pala, CA 92059

Room: Sycamore 8 & 9

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Reginald Pagaling, *Chairperson*
Buffy McQuillen, *Vice-Chairperson*
Isaac Bojorquez, *Secretary*
Wayne Nelson, *Parliamentarian*
Bennae Calac
Stanley Rodriguez

STAFF PRESENT

Andrew Alejandro, *Executive Secretary*
Michelle Carr, *Chief Counsel*
Mario Pallari, *Staff Counsel*
Conner Mulligan, *Staff Services Manager I*

COMMISSIONERS REMOTE

Sara Dutschke

CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairperson Pagaling called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.
2. Roll call – a quorum was established.
3. The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) Commissioners and staff were introduced.

Commissioner Stanley Rodriguez was not in attendance at this time.
4. Commissioner Wayne Nelson led the Traditional Opening.

ACTION

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. January 16, 2026 – Open Session

Commission Vote: Approve January 16, 2026, Open Session minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Secretary Bojorquez

Aye: 6; **Nay:** 0; **Abstained:** 0

Motion carried.

2. July 17, 2026, Commission Meeting Location

Chairperson Pagaling requested that the July 17, 2026, Commission meeting be held in Santa Ynez. Commissioner Calac noted that Sycuan/KCRC had offered to host in the past and could be considered a second option. No decision on the matter was made at the time.

3. CSU Systemwide/Campus Repatriation and Oversight Committee Nominations

Staff Counsel Pallari stated that all these candidates have been reviewed by the subcommittee and are recommended. The balancing analysis has been done, and these candidates would not create an imbalance on the committees.

CSU Bakersfield

- a. Commission to consider the nomination of Dr. Maria Gutierrez de Jesus, CSU Native American Studies Representative, CSU Bakersfield

Commission Vote: Nominate Dr. Maria Gutierrez de Jesus to CSU Bakersfield Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

CSU Sacramento

- b. Commission to consider the nomination of Amber Bill, CSU Representative, CSU Sacramento

Commission Vote: Nominate Amber Bill to CSU Sacramento Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Secretary Bojorquez

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

- c. Commission to consider the nomination of Clyde Prout III, Non-Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, CSU Sacramento

Commission Vote: Nominate Clyde Prout III to CSU Sacramento Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Vice-Chairperson McQuillen

Second: Commissioner Nelson

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

CSU San Jose

- d. Commission to consider the nomination of Louise J. Miranda Ramirez, Non-Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, CSU San Jose

Commission Vote: Nominate Louise J. Miranda Ramirez to CSU San Jose Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Secretary Bojorquez

Second: Commissioner Calac

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

4. UC Systemwide/Campus Repatriation and Oversight Committee Nominations

UC Davis

- a. Commission to consider the nomination of Ivan Senock, UC Representative, UC Davis

Commission Vote: Nominate Ivan Senock to UC Davis Repatriation and Oversight Committee.

Motion: Commissioner Nelson

Second: Commissioner Calac

Aye 6; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

INFORMATIONAL

5. CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations

Chief Counsel Carr formally notified the Commission that the CalNAGPRA Mediation and Dispute Resolution Regulations had been approved by the Office of Administrative Law and filed with Secretary of State on March 4, 2026, and are effective July 1, 2026.

6. Staff Update on the Illegal Removal of Human Remains by the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A

Chief Counsel Carr provided the staff report to the Commission, detailing that the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A did return the human remains to the designated MLD on August 6, 2025. The Juaneño Band of Mission Indians Acjachemen Nation 84A suspension of being named MLD was lifted and no further incidents of this nature have occurred involving this tribe.

Commissioner Stanley Rodriguez joined the meeting at 10:19 am.

7. California Indian Heritage Center

California State Parks Superintendent, John Fraser, gave an overview presentation of the California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) building plans. Superintendent Fraser mentioned that groundbreaking happened on Monday April 13, 2026. A variety of Commissioners noted that they did not attend the groundbreaking ceremony and wished that outreach would have been better organized to make all California native people feel included. Commissioners informed Superintendent Fraser that Native Americans do not go onto other native territories or lands and perform ceremony without express permission from the native tribe itself and so they are concerned about this property being open for ceremonial purposes without any explanation. The Commission voiced concerns that the tribal consultation did not include all the tribes of California, and it seems that only a few tribes were consulted, only recently. As well as the amount of California Native representation on the Board of Directors, they recommend 100% California Native Board rather than only 51%.

Superintendent Fraser responded to those concerns and let the Commission know that he would send over the documentation of tribal consultation of the project.

Public Hearing 11:05 am – CalNAGPRA Enforcement Proposed Regulations

Proposed addition of sections 31020 – 31027, to Title 14, California Code of Regulations

Executive Secretary Alejandre read into the record the notice to the public regarding the public hearing process and public comment process.

There were no public comments made during the public hearing.

Back to Quarterly Meeting – 11:14 am.

7. California Indian Heritage Center – Continued

The Commission continued their conversation with California State Parks Superintendent, John Fraser, and brought up their concerns with the design of building structures, tribal consultation with both local tribes and tribes all throughout the State of California, the Board of Directors, operating budget, and fiscal demands of the CIHC. Vice Chairperson McQuillen asked how many taskforce meetings have been held over the last year and a half, and if a future task meeting is scheduled. John Fraser responded that he would provide an exact number of task force meetings and if any more are currently scheduled. Chairperson Pagaling stressed the importance of transparency and consultation moving forward.

8. Executive Secretary Report

Executive Secretary Alejandre reported that from January 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, the Environmental and Cultural Division made 10 Most Likely Descendant (MLD) designations, received and completed 1603 NAHC contact list requests, and completed 5189 searches of the Sacred Lands File (SLF). He also provided an update on new staff at the NAHC, Staff Services Manager, Elizabeth Azevedo, and new Analyst, Joshua Nowakowski. Executive Secretary Alejandre attended the Tribal Leaders' Summit, along with Staff Service Manager Elizabeth Azevedo. Executive Secretary Alejandre also attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the California Indian Heritage Center. Executive Secretary Alejandre notified the Commission that the job posting for the Deputy Executive Secretary position is now live on the Governor's website.

Chairperson Pagaling wanted an update on the vacant Commissioner positions.

Executive Secretary Alejandre notified the Commission that there are a few interested candidates that are currently submitting the paperwork to become Commissioners. But there is no formal response from the Governor's Office on those yet.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen brought up the Strategic Plan and wanted Executive Secretary Alejandre to work on that plan. She also brought up the Digital Atlas; it had been discussed in a previous meeting that the CIHC would eventually take that over and since they have broken ground if they have the capacity to house that online.

Executive Secretary Alejandre updated the Commission regarding the Strategic plan; the Strategic Plan Subcommittee was unable to convene since the last commission meeting. But a lot of the survey responses wanted prioritization of the regulations which are underway.

Commissioner Calac noted that a Strategic Plan Subcommittee meeting is needed and hopes to get something on the books soon. She also brought up the 50th Anniversary Planning.

Executive Secretary Alejandre said that he has found a location for the celebration but would request that the Commission pin down a date to be able to further the planning logistics.

Commissioner Calac mentioned the possibility of a date sometime in November. Tribes are excited about this event, and an offline meeting may be scheduled soon.

9. Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Calac notified the public of the upcoming Sacred Lands File Workshop on May 1, 2026, at the Soboba Casino.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen updated the public regarding the Contact List Regulations, which are currently under internal review, and the release of a new draft is pending. She also updated the public regarding the Most Likely Descendant Regulations; the first draft is also pending but does not have an estimated release date at this time.

A variety of Commissioners notified the public of upcoming events happening in their communities.

Break for lunch from 11:54 am – 1:04 pm.

CLOSED SESSION

Pending litigation: California Indian Nation v. Native American Heritage Commission, Superior Court of Sacramento County, Case No. 25-WM-000157 (Government Code, § 11126(e)(1), (2)(A)).

Closed Session Announced 1:05 pm.
Return from Closed Session 2:06 pm.

Nothing to report from Closed Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Nathan Banda, Chairman, Juaneño Band of Mission Indians - Acjachemen Nation 84A, thanked the Commission, Executive Secretary, and Chief Counsel for their engagement and collaboration during tribal consultation a few months ago. They are grateful for addressing their concerns and convening further consultation with them. They look forward to working together to address the matters outlined in the letter from the Nation's legal counsel, Hans Britsch, and continuing this process in a constructive and respectful manner. He also thanked the legal staff for providing the requested public records which helped to ensure that both governments have a clear and shared understanding of past actions and how we can move forward in good faith.
2. Andrew Lara, Vice Chair, Juaneño Band of Mission Indians - Acjachemen Nation 84A, gave an overview of the history of his tribe. As well as background information regarding the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians separation into multiple bands, resulting in the NAHC's rotation list of naming MLDs.
3. Hans Britsch, Attorney, Juaneño Band of Mission Indians - Acjachemen Nation 84A, came to discuss two issues; the MLD rotation list and the village site/territorial assignments. He stated that since the separation of the tribes in 1995, the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians – Belardes received 19 MLD designations and Juaneño Band of Mission Indians - Acjachemen Nation 84A received 6. He also stated that the Gabrielino/Tongva rotation file contains 8 village site tabs, meanwhile Juaneño/Acjachemen file contains only one. The NAHC's records document 75 Acjachemen village sites spanning from Puvunga through San Clemente, and into Riverside and San Diego Counties. Through their communications with Chief Counsel, they have seen only one handbook source used to support the current boundaries. He stated that under the NAHC's internal procedures, staff are required to use

multiple reference materials, and one 48-year-old source does not meet the standard. They look forward to continuing their conversations with staff and expect to keep meeting them on these issues. He goes on to state, on the rotation issue, they asked to be placed on the agenda at the next meeting so that the Commission can evaluate what remedies, if any, need to be assessed in light of the historical disparity in MLD designations. On the mapping issue, they hope that it will be resolved with staff by the next meeting.

Commissioner Nelson asked a line of questions of Attorney Hans Britsch regarding the incident that took place regarding the illegal removal of human remains and his view of what happened.

Attorney Hans Britsch responded letting the Commission know that he understands that there was a miscommunication regarding who was the proper MLD and Chairman Banda truly thought that he was the rightful MLD which is why he did that. He understands that the NAHC is the only entity that can designate an MLD. But the rotation list was suggestive that the Juaneño Band of Mission Indians - Acjachemen Nation 84A would have been named MLD next, as the Belardes group was named MLD in 2020. They are understanding that they were wrong in their assumption, but they wish to rectify the situation moving forward.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen asked for further clarification regarding the geographic issue he brought up, in regard to AB52.

Attorney Hans Britsch clarified that the issue is surrounding the variance between only one village site and the 75 village sites that the Acjachemen should be associated with that is tied to the rotation list. In comparison, the Gabrielino/Tongva rotation file contains 8 village site tabs. He is requesting that the NAHC staff work with the tribe to include all of their village sites in the rotation file rather than just the one.

Vice-Chairperson McQuillen stated that the tribe has the ability to update their maps without having to consult with the staff.

Attorney Hans Britsch stated that he is not expecting staff to assist in coming up with the ethnographic or historical data. He is asking them to listen to their experts, to the extent that what they are finding contradicts the existing rotation lists.

Secretary Bojorquez asked if the tribe has submitted their updated map to the staff at the NAHC.

Attorney Hans Britsch responded that they have not.

4. Janet Garcia-Hall, CRM Manager, Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, provided a letter to the Commission regarding the draft Contact List Regulations. They are requesting that the contact list include federally recognized as well as non-federally recognized tribes.
5. Kellen Hernandez, Enrolled Tribal Citizen, San Luis Rey Band of Mission Indians, stated that the tribes that are included in the Contact List should be held to the highest standards. And if satisfying new criteria is challenging, then that is an issue that those leaders need to face. He has seen the proposed the criteria and it seems very reasonable to him that these changes can be satisfied. He does not believe that any tribal group or organization should be grandfathered on to the NAHC Contact List. And if satisfying the updated criteria is an issue with these changes, then those people who claim to be leaders of those tribal groups or organizations should relinquish control, via elections, of course, and a peaceful transfer of power.
6. Dr. Maura Sullivan, Enrolled Member, Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, came online to speak in conjunction with the letter that Janet Garcia-Hall provided to the Commission regarding the draft Contact List Regulations. Her biggest concern with the current draft is that mission records would not be allowed in terms of proving tribe's lineage. Her tribe was affected by the missions in California. She wanted to note that she was not speaking on behalf of her tribe, but just as a Chumash person.

7. Valerie Stanley, THPO, Sherwood Valley/Shabaldano Kai Tribe, she wanted to leave some comments to the Commission regarding the CIHC. She thanked the Commissioners who made comments regarding the CIHC project, especially comments made by Chairperson Pagaling regarding the Coastal Indians and the canoe landing. She expressed frustrations regarding the outreach for consultation on the project. She noted that Sherwood Valley requested consultation and did not receive any response. She felt like she was not heard by the project organizers and felt the accessibility to the various round table meetings that were held could have been better so that she would have been able to attend.
8. Mariza Sullivan, Former Tribal Chair, Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation, noted that she was involved in tribal consultation during Covid. She also agreed with the Commissioners regarding the CIHC project and tribal consultation issues.
9. Lucia Majel voiced her concern that non-federally recognized tribes were feeling unsupported when her tribe specifically supported the NAHC at its establishment.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Vote: Adjourn the April 17, 2026, Commission Meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Calac

Second: Commissioner Rodriguez

Aye 7; Nay 0; Abstained 0

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted and approved on behalf of the Native American Heritage Commission.

Reginald Pagaling, *Chairperson*

Isaac Bojorquez, *Secretary*