

**Testimony of
Anthony Roberts
Chairman, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
On
H.R. 6366, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act
Before the House Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**

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Good morning, Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher and members of the Committee. My name is Anthony Roberts and I am the Chairman of the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. I appear before you today to speak in support of H.R. 6366, the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act.

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation is a federally-recognized tribal government located in rural Yolo County northwest of Sacramento, California. Today, our lands and government are centered in the Capay Valley, just to the south and east of the Walker Ridge site subject to this bill. But our Patwin ancestors once occupied large areas that include lands today known as the counties of Yolo, Solano, Colusa, Lake Napa, including both Walker Ridge and the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument more generally.

The Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation has a long and significant connection to Walker Ridge, which is steeped in thousands of years of rich history and is profoundly meaningful to the Patwin people. Elements of the natural landscape on the ridge have traditional cultural significance to us and include areas where religious ceremonies are practiced and sites that are central to our people's origin stories.

Because of our deep ties to this land, Congressman Garamendi has included a provision in the legislation naming "Walker Ridge" as "Molok Luyuk" (Pronounced: Ma.lok/ Lue.yoke), which means Condor Ridge in our Patwin language. Condors once flew over the ridge in abundance and, if successful in protecting this area, ongoing habitat restoration efforts could allow the condor to return.

In addition to its cultural importance to tribes in the area, Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, and Molok Luyuk specifically, support many rare biological habitats including chaparral, native grasslands, unique low-elevation forests of pine and cypress, and oak woodlands.

Molok Luyuk especially unusual "serpentine" soils derived from an ancient sea floor. Rare plants have evolved to grow only on this serpentine soil. Molok Luyuk is one of the most important areas of serpentine plant habitat in the state and is home to a long list of rare species, including the beautiful blue Indian Valley brodiaea. In fact, it is home to [--] species found nowhere else in the world.

Molok Luyuk is also home to endangered wildlife such as bald and golden eagles, badgers, ringtails, and peregrine falcons. In addition, the area is a recognized wildlife migration pathway for a multitude of species, including deer, elk, mountain lion, black bear, and bobcat.

Many of these plant and animal species are traditionally important to the life ways of the Patwin people, and we consider their protection and stewardship to be part of our sacred responsibility to the land.

Proper management is necessary to preserve these unique lands and protect cultural resources, while also ensuring the availability of recreational opportunities for sightseers, mountain bikers, hikers, off-highway vehicle users, campers, and equestrians.

We believe H.R. 6366 includes a unique approach to management – “cooperative stewardship” or “cooperative management” – will preserve and maintain the cultural values of the area while at the same time ensuring that the general public will also continue to enjoy the benefits of this area.

To that end, H.R. 6366 directs the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service, in consultation with affected federal-recognized Indian tribes like Yocha Dehe, to develop a management plan that makes use of federal authority to enter cooperative and collaborative tribal partnerships. A lengthy, but not exhaustive, list of the authorities is listed in the bill.

This co-stewardship provision is extremely important to us. First of all, it requires the responsible federal agencies to complete a management plan for the Monument. Although the Monument was originally designated back in 2015, there is no Monument management plan currently in place.

Second, H.R. 6366 ensures that tribal knowledge, perspective, and practices will be part of the Monument’s management going forward. That makes sense. After all, the area’s unique cultural resources and history were among the original reasons for its protection.

Third, the co-stewardship provisions of H.R. 6366 represent an important opportunity for innovation while also remaining firmly grounded in federal law and policy.

Put simply, we believe that this type of management best serves the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument communities. With our long history in this area, we have a unique perspective on how this land should be managed and we are willing to apply our historic practices with modern technologies to ensure that Molok Luyuk is preserved and healthy, a place for all to enjoy.

In addition to requiring the creation of a plan to ensure appropriate protection, restoration, and management of this treasured area, H.R. 6366 would provide critical protections to Native American cultural resources, traditional sacred sites and trails. We greatly appreciate Congressman Garamendi’s leadership in protecting this area that has cultural significance to the Patwin people, other northern California tribes, and those committed to conserving native habitats and wildlife. For this project, Yocha Dehe has built successful relationships with our

federal legislative representatives, federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and the National Forest Service, national organizations such as the Sierra Club, local conservation groups such as Tuleyome, and other local tribes.

For the reasons stated above, the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation wholeheartedly supports this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I'd be happy to answer any questions.