



April 28, 2022

Via email

Dear Topaz Museum Board,

We are writing in response to your letter dated April 8. We also would like to make four requests.

It is regrettable that the Museum Board made the unilateral decision that there will be no second meeting with the WMC, thus discarding a plan for future joint committee meetings – a plan to move forward – that was tentatively approved by all six attendees of the first meeting on Feb. 15. Topaz Museum was represented by Ned Isokawa, Sherrie Hayashi and Scott Bassett; WMC was represented by Satsuki Ina, Kimiko Marr and Nancy Ukai.

In your letter you stated the Board's displeasure with a live stream that the Wakasa Memorial Committee aired on Feb. 17 in which you said disparaging statements were made. You quoted one of the panelists, Patrick Hayashi, a 78-year-old survivor who was born at Topaz. He asked the board to apologize to the two archaeologists whom the Museum Board blamed for its own unanimous decision to have a rubbish collector excavate the stone on July 27, 2021, using construction machinery and without consultation with the Topaz survivor and descendant community. We agree that you owe archeologists Jeff Burton and Mary Farrell an apology.

Pat served as an associate president of the University of California system and retired from an esteemed career in academia. For many years, he and Jane Beckwith worked together and gave educational lectures to Utah school teachers. He is not a member of the Wakasa Memorial Committee nor on our Advisory Board, but even if he were, we would not censor our community members nor place restrictions on their grieving.

The WMC waited since Sept. 7, 2021, the date of our first letter to the Topaz Museum Board, for a first meeting with Board members, which took place on February 15, 2022.

At this first meeting, it was surprising to learn that the Board had already taken actions on the memorial stone, failing to advise stakeholders. The Wakasa Monument and Memorial Site are the cultural property and heritage of the entire Japanese American community, the Topaz community and, in fact, our nation. There is deep concern about the wisdom of the Topaz Museum moving ahead without a cultural resources management plan, without a monitoring plan and without consultation, collaboration and consensus among stakeholders, as was recommended by the NPS. We urge you to consider organizing a community-wide meeting to start the process of stakeholder engagement. We also believe there is value in forming a joint committee, which we return to below.

WMC requests:

1. You invited us to propose measures to protect and preserve the Monument and the Site. In response we formally request a full professional excavation of the Memorial Site carried out as a Community Archaeology project. We encourage the Museum to explore the NPS offer to organize, as part of the site assessment process, this inclusive program which invites community members, such as local residents and students as well as survivors and descendants, to take part in field archaeological processes such as screening soil and data collection. Sharing stories and working together would contribute to and enrich the archaeological and historical legacy of the Topaz NHL. We hope the excavation could be planned for before or around Sept. 11, the 80th anniversary of the opening of the Topaz concentration camp.
2. As described in our March 3, 2022, response to the National Park Service report, we also request a 3-D analysis of the Wakasa Monument and analysis of all four facades. We would appreciate confirmation that actions have been taken to remove the Monument from the wood pallet in the Museum's courtyard, as was suggested in the Feb. 15 meeting.
3. We request that the board publish regular progress reports with photographs about the treatment and status of the Wakasa Monument and the historic Memorial Site on its website and Facebook page. Keeping stakeholders informed on our community's cultural heritage is in accordance with best practices of Board transparency and accountability.
4. We invite the Board to meet with WMC and stakeholders in the joint committee format that was proposed in the first meeting.

We look forward to future communications with the Board and remain committed to finding a mutually agreed upon path forward.

Sincerely,

Wakasa Memorial Committee  
WakasaMemorial@gmail.com  
<https://wakasamemorial.org>

Kiyoshi Ina, Topaz Survivor  
Toru Saito, Topaz Survivor  
Hiroshi Shimizu, Topaz, Tule Lake, Crystal City Survivor; father, Iwao Shimizu, member of 1943  
Wakasa Committee  
Akemi Yamane, Topaz Survivor; born at Topaz the day after Wakasa was killed  
Lauren Araki, Topaz Descendant  
Sarah Julia Escobido Brandenstein, Topaz descendant  
Cheryl Ann Escobido, Topaz descendant  
Midori Hogg, Topaz Descendant  
Patti Iiyama, Topaz Descendant  
Claudia Katayanagi, Topaz Descendant

Mari Matsumoto, Topaz and Poston Descendant  
Martha Nakagawa, Topaz, Tule Lake and Leupp Descendant  
Gail Nanbu, Topaz Descendant  
Barbara Suyehiro, Topaz Descendant  
Diana Emiko Tsuchida, Topaz Descendant  
Nancy Ukai, Topaz Descendant  
Ruth Wakabayashi Kondo, Topaz Descendant  
Bif Brigman, historian, Minidoka Pilgrimage former co-chair  
Karen Kiyo Lowhurst, Heart Mountain Descendant  
Chizu Omori, Poston Survivor  
Emiko Omori, Poston Survivor  
John Ota, Descendant of so-called “voluntary evacuees”  
Barbara Takei, Tule Lake Descendant  
Paul Tomita, Minidoka Survivor

### **Advisory Council**

Tetsuden Kashima, Topaz Survivor, Professor Emeritus, American Ethnic Studies Department and Sociology, University of Washington  
Masako Takahashi, Topaz Survivor, Takahashi Family Foundation  
Satsuki Ina, Topaz Descendant; Tule Lake, Crystal City Survivor  
Dr. Karen Korematsu, Topaz Descendant, Founder & Executive Director Fred T. Korematsu Institute  
Stacey Camp, Archaeologist, Director of the Campus Archaeology Program, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Michigan State University  
Roger Daniels, Charles Phelps Taft Professor Emeritus of History, University of Cincinnati  
Art Hansen, Professor Emeritus History, Asian American Studies, California State University, Fullerton  
Donald Teruo Hata, Gila River Survivor, Professor Emeritus of History, CSU Dominguez Hills  
Tom Ikeda, Minidoka Descendant, Densho Founding Executive Director  
Japanese American Citizens League, Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District  
Michelle G. Magalong, University of Maryland Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in Historic Preservation, President of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation  
Roger Shimomura, Minidoka Survivor, Distinguished Professor Emeritus  
Renee Tajima-Peña, Heart Mountain, Tule Lake, Gila River Descendant, UCLA Professor of Asian American Studies, filmmaker  
Karen Umemoto, Manzanar Descendant, UCLA Professor of Asian American Studies and Urban Planning  
Mary Urashima, Historian, author, Historic Wintersburg  
Duncan Ryūken Williams, Buddhist priest and Professor of Religion/American Studies & Ethnicity, University of Southern California  
Jay Xu, Director and CEO, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

CC:

Mike Reynolds, Regional Director, Interior Regions 6,7,8, National Park Service

Lisa P. Davidson, Acting Program Manager, National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service

Justin Henderson, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Region, NPS

Robert Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Jennifer Ortiz, Director, Utah Division of State History

Chris Merritt, Utah State Historic Preservation Office

Carol Kawase, district governor NCWNP, JACL

David Inoue, Executive Director, JACL

Jani Iwamoto, Utah state senator, 4th District