



VIA EMAIL

Topaz Museum
PO Box 241
Delta UT 84624

October 25, 2021

Dear Topaz Museum Board President Jane Beckwith and Board Members Lance Atkinson, Scott Bassett, Lorelei Draper, Rick Okabe, Hisashi Bill Sugaya, and Teresa Thompson:

Thank you for Jane Beckwith's undated letter which we received via email on October 12, 2021, and for an email dated October 13, 2021, from the Topaz Museum Board (Board), both of which we received through Dianne Fukami. We understand and welcome the letter and email as responses on behalf of the Board to the September 7, 2021 letter by the Wakasa Memorial Committee (WMC) to the Board. As you know, our September 7 letter proposed six points as a framework for the WMC, the Board and other stakeholders to move forward on the preservation, curation and interpretation of the Wakasa Monument and the Memorial site.

We welcome your positive responses to some of the six points in our letter. We note that you did not raise any objections to any of our six proposals, which we interpret as your implicit acceptance of our framework. However, if in fact you do not accept or disagree with one or more of the six points, please let us know.

Let us review where we stand on our proposed framework in light of Jane Beckwith's recent letter and the Board's recent email, and some new proposals we have developed which we hope will further advance our joint efforts to move forward.

1. Recognition of the Wakasa Memorial Committee and its Advisory Council.

Jane Beckwith's recent letter and the Board's email to the WMC imply that the Board recognizes the WMC. However the WMC wants to formalize this recognition through the adoption of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Board and WMC. The MOA will include provisions for a mutually acceptable system of regular and direct communication between the WMC and the Board, as well as how decisions will be made concerning the future of the Wakasa Monument and the excavation site and how to include a range of stakeholder views. The WMC will begin drafting the MOA as a basis for the Board and WMC to discuss and move forward on this important step.

Although we appreciate Dianne Fukami's efforts, until an MOA is approved, the WMC requests that communications between the Board and WMC be direct email exchanges. The Board can send its emails to the WMC to John Ota (at johnota@sbcglobal.net), who will ensure distribution to the WMC. If the Board wishes to designate how the WMC should send emails to the Board, please let us know

2. Apology for Desecration of the Memorial Site.

The WMC welcomes and accepts Jane Beckwith's apology and acceptance of full responsibility for the July 27 actions as stated in her recent letter, even as we continue to be concerned that, according to the Friends of Topaz, (*Nichibei Weekly*, Sept. 2, 2021) "the decision to excavate the monument was made by the entire Topaz Museum Board." This suggests that responsibility for the monument's removal does not lie on the shoulders of only one person. As we have previously stated, the July 27 excavation of the Wakasa Monument disturbed the memorial site, the National Historic Landmark, and ignored basic standards and protocols established for the protection of nationally important historical and cultural artifacts.

3. Archaeological Assessment and Release of Video and Photography

With winter approaching, informed community members are deeply concerned about the preservation and protection of the Wakasa monument and the excavation site. To that end, National Park Service archaeologists in the Intermountain Region have offered their services, if invited by the Board, to provide technical and archaeological assistance to conduct an expert assessment and make recommendations regarding the memorial site and the Wakasa Monument as soon as can be arranged. We also request that a member of the WMC be present. Please contact Justin Henderson, Justin_Henderson@nps.gov by November 5, 2021, if you agree to engage the services of the NPS. In the interests of transparency, we also request that by November 5 the Board release to WMC all unedited video, photos, and other recordings of the July 27, 2021 excavation.

4. Partnership and Consultation with the Wakasa Memorial Committee.

The WMC welcomes the Board's agreement to collaborate with the WMC to preserve, curate, and interpret the monument and National Historic Landmark site in accordance with wishes of Survivors, Descendants, and Japanese American stakeholders and in accordance with best professional practices. The MOA referenced above, will set the framework and procedures for this collaboration.

5. Memorial Ceremony at the Topaz site.

The WMC is very pleased that the Board has agreed to our proposal for a jointly-planned and community-involved Memorial Ceremony for April 11, 2023, the 80th anniversary of Wakasa's death. We agree with your proposal that three representatives from the Board and three representatives from the WMC begin the planning for this event. We also propose that three others, representing Topaz survivors and descendants, and other Japanese American stakeholders, and mutually agreed upon by the Board and WMC, be added.

6. Mediation between Topaz Museum Board and Wakasa Memorial Committee.

Given the complexity of the issues and the strong feelings on both sides, the WMC believes that the Board and the WMC should engage an experienced mediator to help resolve the many questions and controversies that are likely to arise as we jointly address the five previous points. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, in their endorsement of our six-step proposal, recommended that the first step be to select a mediator who would assist in drafting a Memorandum of Agreement. We are agreeable to this approach as well. We propose that by Nov. 15 both the Board and WMC name potential mediators.

The WMC hopes that our new proposals will help us and all stakeholders to move forward with the important tasks of preserving, curating, interpreting, and celebrating the Wakasa Monument and the Memorial site at the National Historic Landmark, a sacred site, and the most significant revelation regarding the wartime mass incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Given the urgency of protecting the Monument and the Memorial site from adverse weather conditions we request that the Board respond to the proposals in Item 3 regarding the monument and memorial site by November 5. We also respectfully request that the Board respond to the other proposals in this letter by November 15.

Very truly yours,

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

Midori Hogg, Topaz Descendant

Patti Iiyama, Topaz Descendant

Claudia Katayanagi, Topaz Descendant

Kimiko Marr, Topaz Descendant

Mari Matsumoto, Topaz and Poston Descendant

Martha Nakagawa, Topaz, Tule Lake and Leupp Descendant

Gail Nanbu, Topaz descendant

Diana Emiko Tsuchida, Topaz Descendant

Nancy Ukai, 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 (partial)

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 CA, Western NV, 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

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, National Park Service
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
Dianne Fukami