

July 24, 2022

Dear Wakasa Memorial Committee:

When we were informed on July 20 that some of your members would be holding a ceremony at the Topaz concentration camp site on July 23 and stopping afterward to see the Wakasa stone at the Topaz Museum, we responded in a welcoming fashion, recommending safety precautions to take when visiting the site. The Topaz Museum Board has been nothing but respectful in its dealings with the WMC.

Therefore, we were unprepared for the confrontation that Board President Jane Beckwith and Board Member Scott Bassett faced at the museum when members of the WMC repeatedly demanded to see video of the Wakasa stone removal that happened last year, July 27, 2021. When asked, several members of your group denied that the interaction was being recorded; however, the person operating the camera confirmed that he was recording. If the camera was rolling during this incident, no one from the Topaz Museum board has given, nor gives permission, to be recorded.

We find Saturday's actions to be the latest in a series of events in which WMC continues to undermine any goodwill or cooperative spirit. Specific examples include the YouTube live program streamed on February 17, full of negativity about the Topaz Museum Board, the ongoing WMC strategy to publicly announce its own agenda and plans for Topaz site events and meetings without including the Topaz Museum Board, and continued social media diatribes.

We have created pathways for all members of our community to make their voices heard and to help shape the future of the Wakasa Monument and a commemoration of the 80th anniversary of Mr. Wakasa's killing next year (<https://www.topazcommunityoutreach.com/>). We invite you to be a part of creating positive inclusive solutions together with the Topaz community.

Sincerely,

Topaz Museum Board of Directors

Jane Beckwith, President

Lance Atkinson, Scott Bassett, Kiley Chase, Lorelei Draper, Sherrie Hayashi, Mark Nelson, Rick Okabe, Hisashi Bill Sugaya, Teresa Thompson, Patricia Wakida

cc:

Mike Reynolds, Regional Director, Interior Regions 6, 7, 8, NPS

Lisa P. Davidson, Acting Program Manager, National Historic Landmarks Program, NPS

Justin Henderson, Heritage Partnerships Program, Intermountain Region, NPS

Robert Nieweg, National Trust for Historic Preservation

Michelle Magalong, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation

Jennifer Ortiz, Director, Utah Division of State History

Chris Merritt, Utah State Historic Preservation Office

Carol Kawase, District Governor NCWNP, JAACL

David Inoue, Executive Director, JAACL

Jani Iwamoto, Utah State Senator, 4th District