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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Name of Project: Strawberry Ridge Vegetation Management #64510

I am writing as a private citizen to request that the Strawberry Ridge Vegetation Management 1) work in close partnership with the Timpanogos Nation, to ensure that the project 2) is managed in the most sustainable way possible, appropriate to the natural ecology and wisdom of local Indigenous ecological traditions and 3) supports their lawful aboriginal treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather (including for religious/spiritual reasons), especially on land originally "set apart for the permanent settlement and exclusive occupation" of the Indigenous people of Utah Territory, who they still legally are, as their ancestors were when the reservation (then called the Uinta Valley Reservation) was ratified in 1864 (<http://timpanogostribe.com/history2.html>).

I regularly visit Strawberry Reservoir and the area around it along Highway 40, and have started kayaking there with friends. Over the past year, I've been learning more about the Timpanogos people, some of whose ancestors knew and protected some of my Fort Utah settler ancestors. In the process, I've been fortunate to get to know Mary Meyer, Chief Executive of the Timpanogos Nation and other members of their tribal government and families, thanks to their kindness, patience, and long, hard work educating the public, including at the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Forum at BYU last March (<https://pws.byu.edu/tek>).

I've learned that the Timpanogos Nation's genealogy and history are extremely well-documented but often misinterpreted and ignored. The aboriginal people of an extensive region surrounding Utah Lake, along and up into the mountains of the Wasatch Range, they called themselves the Timpanogos, as recorded by the Dominguez-Escalante expedition in 1776. The Franciscan Fathers of the expedition were led from Western Colorado to Utah Valley by a Timpanogos guide ('Silvestre') they met on the way, through what is now the Uinta National Forest and Strawberry Valley to Utah Lake, where they witnessed a thriving culture.

As a result, Utah Lake was originally known as Laguna de los Timpanogos and Timpanogos Lake. Traders, fur trappers, explorers and settlers, including Brigham Young, understood the need to travel carefully through this area, as it was Timpanogos territory. When the Mormon settlers arrived, Timpanogos chiefs, including brothers Walkara, Sowiette, Aropene, Sanpitch, Tabby and Kanosh, led the Timpanogos Nation up and down the Wasatch Front--the grandsons of Chief Turunianchi the Franciscan Fathers met.

After being violently attacked, massacred and driven out of their territory in central Utah into reservations in Utah Valley and then Uinta Valley, the Timpanogos people were disenfranchised from the beginning through chronic mismanagement, corruption and criminal neglect, resulting in ongoing starvation, death from exposure, untreated illnesses and continued genocide, as I have personally read in the Indian agents' annual reports.

This disenfranchisement extended even to Chief Tabby and his direct descendants, some of whom were denied enrollment on the reservation from the beginning, as were many others (<http://timpanogostribe.com/ancestors.html>). As well documented in official reports, Chief Tabby was consistently recognized as the leading representative of all the people indigenous to Utah who lived on the Uinta Valley reservation. Once bands of the Confederated Utes of Colorado were relocated to the reservation in 1880--a reservation specifically set aside for the people indigenous to Utah Territory, not the Territory of Colorado--this disenfranchisement became even more entrenched.

Despite all this, the Timpanogos Nation has managed to pass down traditional wisdom and practices clearly tied to this land from generation to generation--traditions authorities like the Huntington Museum Institute in Lehi have recognized and featured. They still sustainably hunt, fish and gather native plants, roots, herbs, mushrooms and

berries both for food and sacred ceremony. They do so responsibly with great care and respect for the plants, animals and environment, showing attention to the welfare and sustainability of the ecology over time, always stressing the importance of taking from the land in an ethical way that causes the least harm, using everything possible and minimizing waste. I have personally witnessed--and tasted--this knowledge in action.

In that spirit -- of treating the land responsibly with great care, minimal harm, and sustainable use -- I ask that the Timpanogos Nation be included and consulted in the Strawberry Ridge Vegetation Management project. Their traditional ecological values, practices and wisdom are, in my opinion, exactly what we need most for the public to manage land in a way that benefits humans, animals and plants as part of the same interconnected ecosystem. And in return, the project could provide the Timpanogos Nation needed firewood, assistance in educating the public in how to treat native plants and animals appropriately, protection in carrying out their aboriginal treaty rights to gather, hunt, and fish without unlawful interference, or whichever services are deemed most appropriate by them. Finally, in my opinion, this kind of partnership is a meaningful step in fulfilling our duty as American citizens who pledge to provide liberty and justice for all.