

NEWS RELEASE



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California State Parks

Finalist Selected As Preferred Site Of New California Indian Heritage Center

SACRAMENTO – Meeting today in Sacramento, the California Indian Heritage Center Task Force voted their preference and a second choice for the location of the new California Indian Heritage Center, California State Park officials announced today.

The location selected as the preferred site is known as the Northgate property, located along the American River, near the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers and near the junction of Highway 160 and Northgate Boulevard in the City of Sacramento. It was chosen on a five-to-three vote of the Task Force.

The Task Force also voted five-to-three on a second choice, in case the forthcoming exploration of the first site proves that it would not be feasible location. The second choice is known as the Folsom site, located on a bluff along the south side of Lake Natoma, overlooking the lake, near the Folsom Boulevard-Highway 50 Interchange. A third location, not selected, known as the Freeport Site, is located immediately south of the Freeport area, near Interstate 5 at the Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge.

“This is not our final decision yet,” said Task Force Chair Cindy La Marr, “because we must now study significant issues presented by both of these recommended sites. However, we will continue to do our very best to work hard to see that appropriate steps are taken to make this Indian Heritage Center a world-class showplace of our California Indian heritage.”

La Marr emphasized that the Center, under the guidance of California Indian people, would fill a long-standing need to educate the public about California Indian history, cultures and traditions, both for Native and non-Native citizens.

Walter Gray, Chief of the Cultural Resources Division of California State Parks and a member of the Task Force, described the outcome of the site selection process: "Comprehensive planning for the California Indian Heritage Center can move forward now that a preferred site has been identified. The project still has a long way to go, but the good work performed by the Task Force and staff has brought the vision of the Indian Heritage Center one step closer to reality."

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The preferred site was one of three sites considered at Friday's meeting that had been previously selected from a list of 10 proposals submitted from around the state and considered by the Task Force. Although it is the preferred site, it is not necessarily the site that will be ultimate location of the center.

Under the selection process, the Task Force's action to recommend a site initiates a detailed planning process that will include substantial community outreach and detailed technical studies. The preferred site will next be considered by California State Parks which will conduct an in depth analysis to determine if the property is feasible to acquire and what level of development is possible on that site.

Based on the information she receives, State Parks Director Ruth Coleman will make the final determination on whether the project will go forward on the site.

Preliminary plans for the Center include exhibit galleries and a theater, traditional structures, native plant gardens, and ceremonial areas. The estimated 60,000-square-foot building would also include curation facilities, a research center, and meeting rooms. The grounds would include areas for special events and traditional gatherings. The Center would serve as the hub of cultural activities by California Indian people from throughout the state, and connect/link existing and emerging local, State, and tribal museums through electronic media, training programs, and shared exhibitions.

Building the museum would take place in phases, but is expected to eventually attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

The Task Force was established by SB 2063 (Senator Jim Brulte, R-Rancho Cucamonga) to advise State Parks on the establishment of the new cultural Center. The Center will be governed in partnership with a nonprofit organization and the California Indian community to ensure that it reflects the values of California's Indian people.

An initial \$5 million in voter-approved parks bond monies allocated for the project would provide funding for the preliminary phase, which would include a master plan and some site development. Subsequent phases would be funded from a variety of sources including state government, private organizations, and philanthropic donors.

Additional information may be obtained by visiting www.ciccm.org

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