

# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

## Tribes, National Park Service agree to co-management plan for Point Reyes seashore

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The National Park Service and a federation of Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo tribes have signed a new management agreement for [Point Reyes National Seashore](#), allowing the Native Americans greater authority in decision making at the seashore.

The new government-to-government relationship, announced Tuesday, involves land at the national seashore and sections of Marin County also managed by the superintendent of Point Reyes National Seashore.

Superintendent Craig Kenkel said in a [statement](#) that the new agreement establishes the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria as "solid partners" with the park service in the "overall stewardship of Park lands and places."



Point Reyes National Seashore (John Burgess / The Press Democrat, 2007)

The federally recognized tribe will focus their management efforts on cultural resource protection and stewardship, including designating eligible cultural sites for the [National Register of Historic Places](#).

"[The park service] must consult with us on all matters that are sacred and concerning to the tribe," said Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Greg Sarris, speaking to The Sacramento Bee for a story about the tule elk in Point Reyes, before the new agreement was officially announced.

The tribe also seeks to ensure that tribal views and traditional ecological knowledge are integrated into ranching decisions and management practices for Point Reyes' tule elk, a species only found in California.

"A good portion of the amendment regards the care and protection of the elk, which is going to hold the park to be responsible," Sarris said in the same interview. "We will monitor very carefully what's happening with the elk."

In light of the ongoing lawsuit about the tule elk, many environmental activists believe that Point Reyes land should be managed by those with ancestral roots in the area, such as the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

With California's current drought emergency, resources are thin for the tule elk in Point Reyes. As elk populations continue to decline, many of the activists want the National Park Service to provide more food and water resources for the elk. Many activists also call for the end of ranching at the national seashore and the removal of the fence at the Tule Elk Reserve.

And now, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria have a larger stake in these management decisions. Looking beyond the elk herds and ranches, these decisions have deep implications for the land at Point Reyes, which many biologists and other experts say is degraded.

"We know that Point Reyes needs to heal," said Sarris, speaking to The Sacramento Bee for the story about the tule elk at Point Reyes.

Believed to be the only agreement of its kind in the county, the agreement between the tribal interests and the federal government will create a model for future governmental relationships, according to Sarris.

"This government-to-government partnership is a model for other tribes to partner with the NPS and manage federal lands within tribal ancestral territories," Sarris said in a statement.

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