

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

South Coast District Office  
301 E Ocean Blvd., Suite 300  
Long Beach, CA 90802-4302  
(562) 590-5071



**F11a**

**5-21-0023 (City of Seal Beach)**

**April 16, 2021**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

---

**From:** George Somlo <george.somlo1@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Friday, March 12, 2021 1:41 PM

**To:** SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>; George Somlo <george.somlo1@gmail.com>

**Subject:** permit to plant trees in Gum Grove Park, Seal Beach

Project Name and Application Number:

Nature of Communication (In Person, Telephone, Other):

Date and Time Requested:

Full Name: George Somlo M.D.

Email: [George.somlo1@gmail.com](mailto:George.somlo1@gmail.com)

On Behalf Of: self and neighbors

Comments:

Gum Grove Park is adjacent to a wetland area and is within the City of Seal Beach.

One of the residents decided to cut trees to enhance his views a few years back. The City won a lawsuit and as a result was planning to replant a few trees. A few holes were dug in order to plant, and trees were purchased.

Someone or someones (whether individuals or the Gabrielano tribe representatives [Tongva tribe] is unclear to me and my neighbors), appealed and stopped the planting 6 months ago, and presumably the decision is with the Coastal Commission.

Note, that the entrance at the park has been eroded, kids started to ride bikes and digging ramps, and the result is horrendous.

If this is a native land issue, about 1 mile away from the entrance there is already a very nice memorial and walk with plaques commemorating the natives. As far as I know, no remains are at the planned tree planting site.

It is essential that the commission make a favorable decision to plant those trees, I can not think of a better way to preserve the environment and honor the memory of anyone.

Sincerely

George Somlo M.D.

**From:** Anna Christensen [mailto:annachristensen259@gmail.com]

**Sent:** Thursday, April 15, 2021 12:08 PM

**To:** SouthCoast@Coastal; Ann Gadfly

**Subject:** Public Comment on April 2021 Agenda Item Friday 11a - Application No. 5-21-0023 (City of Seal Beach, Seal Beach)

Sierra Club's Los Cerritos Wetlands Task Force would like to thank Coastal Commission Enforcement and other local staff for holding the City of Seal Beach accountable for the bulldozing that damaged the integrity of the Sacred Site of Motuucheyngna in Gum Grove Park and for ensuring that the City followed Chief Anthony Morales' lead in resolving the problem.

We would like to point out that the extensive shell scatter throughout the park as well as multiple documented archaeological sites make this a tribal witness area which must therefore be maintained with minimal disturbance. Private gardens that now intrude into the park need to be removed. Additionally, Motuucheyngna, Gum Grove Park, and the Los Cerritos Wetlands all lie within the boundaries of the Sacred Site of Puvungna as registered with the Native American Heritage Commission. Appropriate signage making the public aware that the park is part of Motuucheyngna and Puvungna could help to avoid further abuses.

The language in the Commission's staff report is exceptionally strong with respect to the recognition of and protection for Sacred Sites and tribal engagement. Describing tribal cultural resources as only "what lies beneath" has resulted in limiting tribal involvement to commenting on archaeological surveys, monitoring sites during construction, and/or providing a Most Likely Descendant when a tribal burial is "accidentally discovered." Much too little too late. Under CEQA, as enforced by the Native American Heritage Commission, tribal people themselves define what is sacred and this includes living beings of all species, as well as places with past or present significance to tribes. Guaranteeing tribal access to sacred sites includes the responsibility to preserve all that makes them so.

Unfortunately, Tribal Traditional Landscapes and Sacred Sites continue to be degraded and even erased by projects that chip away their integrity. Both private and public entities routinely disrespect and disregard Tribal culture keepers who oppose projects that impact sensitive habitats and who object to evidence of tribal history being erased or carted off to museums. It's past time to proactively identify and set aside tribal cultural sites on public land as open space in perpetuity.

While the Coastal Act must balance multiple and often conflicting priorities, it came about because ordinary people took action to stop the destruction of coastal lands and waters. This is the exact intention of those protecting Sacred Sites and Tribal Cultural Resources. Since tribes have 10,000+ years of experience, it's best to follow their lead.