

NORTH FORK RANCHERIA PROJECT PRESS



FRESNO BEE

Opinion

SATURDAY

APRIL 29, 2006

'Should know better'

In her commentary [April 20], "Indians should stay on Indian land," Dixie Jackson of Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians claims that the North Fork Rancheria violates the letter and spirit of the law by proposing a casino site outside its ancestral lands. Ms. Jackson should know better.

The secretary of the interior, not the Chukchansi, is responsible for determining Indian lands. The North Fork Rancheria is proceeding through a transparent, rigorous federal review that Congress established to provide tribes equal opportunity to engage in economic development.

Each tribe's land issues must be examined within the broader context of history and

considered specifically and in detail. The federal government -- not deep-pocketed competitive gaming tribes or their hired-gun lobbyists and politicians -- are best positioned to make fair, objective Indian land determinations. Ironically, Chukchansi has its own current battles with Madera County about what constitutes "Indian lands," and relies solidly on federal government validation.

Ms. Jackson and other opponents of the North Fork Rancheria should allow established federal procedures regarding Indian lands to unfold with minimal outside interference.

Carol Sanders
North Fork Rancheria

FRESNO BEE

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MONDAY

MAY 1, 2006

'Denigrating tribes'

Dixie Jackson, chairperson of the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians, recently accused the North Fork Rancheria of violating the spirit and letter of the law, claiming the tribe has no historical ties to its proposed development site [commentary April 20]. These claims are inaccurate, suspect and tragic.

Inaccurate because they suggest the Mono -- ancestors to many local tribes -- were solitary desert wanderers who traversed the Sierra and invaded the sophisticated Chukchansi, but then stopped at some magical territorial wall exactly 40 miles from North Fork's proposed development site. This fantastic view of Mono history is inaccurate and

insulting to all Indians -- including the many Chukchansi citizens of mixed and Mono ancestry.

Suspect because they mask deeper motivations. Ms. Jackson knows all gaming tribes must follow the law and that Chukchansi's own attorneys advise and promote the North Fork approach in other tribal gaming projects.

Tragic because Ms. Jackson -- who is Mono/Chukchansi -- seems willing to obstruct the North Fork project at all costs, even if it means denigrating tribes and tribal histories such as her own and her relatives.

Ted Davis
Chairman, Board of
Commissioners
Indian Housing
Authority
North Fork Rancheria