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## **Bishop Paiute Tribal Council Reaches Milestone Agreement with California Department of Fish and Wildlife**

**Feb. 6, 2020** — On Tuesday, Jan. 21, the Bishop Paiute Tribal Council and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife signed a historic Memorandum of Agreement reflecting the understanding that each entity has its own unique authority to protect wildlife resources. At its heart, this significant government-to-government agreement acknowledges that the tribe may preserve its traditional culture and intergenerational well-being through its hunting practices.

Both the Bishop Paiute Tribe and CDFW engaged in mutually respectful discussion and negotiation to achieve this milestone, according to the tribe in a recent statement. Chairman Allen Summers observed that CDFW is one of the first state agencies to acknowledge the tribe's testimony regarding why such an MOA is essential for its community's health.

"The signing ceremony was powerful," said Fredericks Peebles & Patterson attorney Anna Hohag, a Bishop Paiute tribal member who has been working on the MOA project for the past two years. "To understand the significance of this moment, you have to understand that due to the unique history of this state, many California tribes have not had the benefit of hunting and fishing rights recognized by the State of California, and therefore our experiences are different than many other tribes. In this case, the tribe's historical relationship with hunting was almost completely cut off."

She also noted that the MOA is an important milestone for all California tribes.

"A lack of California recognition of aboriginal rights has threatened our cultural identity by cutting off access to traditional practices like hunting, fishing and gathering," she said.

"Just last year, Governor Newsom acknowledged the genocide against California tribes," said fellow Fredericks Peebles & Patterson attorney James Qaquandah, who worked with Hohag on the MOA project. "I know some of us wondered if his proclamation would amount to anything more than words, and I think this MOA indicates that there is room for tribes and their advocates to work toward positive results with the current administration.

"More than anything, it was an incredible honor to work with the tribe on this project, and to be part of the signing ceremony," he added.

The MOA provides a process for the tribe to take up to 16 mule deer per year for cultural education purposes. Twelve of these deer are designated for individual take; four can be harvested outside the typical hunting season to further cultural education, and will be preserved and utilized at culturally significant events.

“This MOA represents a big step towards restoring California tribes’ access to cultural practices and aboriginal rights,” Hohag said. “Hopefully it’s just the beginning.”

To learn more about the Bishop Paiute Tribe, visit [www.bishoppaiutetribe.com](http://www.bishoppaiutetribe.com).

Fredericks Peebles & Patterson has offices in Sacramento, California; Louisville, Colorado; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Washington, D.C. To learn more, visit [www.ndnlaw.com](http://www.ndnlaw.com).

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