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By [Stacy Fisher](#)  
Staff Writer

## Maidu Summit Consortium seeks expanded acreage

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The Maidu Summit Consortium & Conservancy's mission is to preserve, protect and promote the Mountain Maidu homeland with a united voice.

Based in Chester, the nonprofit organization envisions reacquired ancestral lands as a vast and unique park system dedicated to the purposes of education, protection and ecosystem management based upon the Maidu culture, according to its website.

Now in its 12th year of existence, the Maidu Summit Consortium is forging relationships between native and non-native communities in its quest to acquire and protect ancestral lands.

The Summit works in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Plumas Audubon Society, the Together Green Project, California Department of Corrections, the Native American Land Trusts & Conservancy, the Land Trust Alliance and the Feather River Land Trust.

The Summit has been directly involved with the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council since its formation in 2003 as a private, nonprofit organization created out of the PG&E bankruptcy filing several years ago.

Ric Notini is director of the Stewardship Council. He said the Council makes recommendations on land donations, and that "about a year ago we recommended that 441 acres of land that make up five separate parcels around Lake Almanor be donated to the Maidu Summit Consortium and Conservancy."

The Maidu identify these particular parcels as being a high priority for acquisition, he noted, adding that the actual transfer of the land is expected to take up to two years.

He said that executive director of the Maidu Summit Consortium, Ken Holbrook, recently initiated an inspection of the properties and found that there was some additional land adjacent to two of the five parcels. Holbrook thought the Stewardship Council should recommend a transfer of title of these properties to the Maidu Consortium.

Notini said after the Stewardship Council board of directors met Jan. 21 to consider the added acreage, the board decided to direct that two hundred additional acres be donated to the Consortium.

"So now the Consortium is likely getting an additional 200 acres for a total of 661 acres," he said.

The land is currently owned and managed by PG&E, and they have agreed as part of its divestment to

transfer title of these lands to the Maidu.

“After we make our recommendation, PG&E forwards that recommendation to the California Public Utilities Commission,” explained Notini.

He said, assuming the Commission approves the transfer, the parties will negotiate and the properties will eventually wind up in the hands of the Consortium, perhaps as early as 2018.

“These parcels are a small part of a major land conservation initiative of the Stewardship Council across 22 counties in the Sierra-Cascades,” he added.

Notini said that of the 140,000 acres of land that’s managed by PG&E, approximately 40,000 acres would be donated to a variety of federal and state agencies, counties, resource conservation districts and tribal organizations.

“These 641 acres that comprise the five parcels represent a very small portion of the 40,000 acres we’re recommending be transferred,” he said.

All the lands that PG&E will continue to own and operate and donated lands will be permanently protected through conservation measures that will ultimately prevent any commercial or industrial development, Notini remarked.

The five parcels will be maintained largely as open space that will include sustainable forestry practices, he said.

“There’s some allowance for improvements,” Notini added, “but generally speaking, the lands are going to be maintained as open space with some public access.”

There is interest in creating a tribal center on one of the sites, “where folks can come to learn about the Maidu culture,” he said.

Another role for the Stewardship Council, Notini continued, is to select organizations that are qualified to manage donated land; in this case the Feather River Land Trust in Quincy, which has substantial experience in managing and protecting properties from development.

“The Trust has been selected as the conservation use holder of all these parcels,” Notini stated.

Notini also mentioned that in 2011 the Council recommended that 57 acres be donated to Plumas County on the northeast portion of Lake Almanor.

“All the remaining land will continue to be owned by PG&E,” concluded Notini.

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