



Letters to the Editor

May 23, 2018

Madrone's many fictions

Trinidad Rancheria has been the subject of harassment and abuse during the Fifth District Supervisor campaign and unfairly characterized and targeted. Some of the statements made to the press by Steve Madrone and his supporters have bordered on racist and discriminatory remarks and have gone unchecked.

I am writing this letter to the editor to express my deep concern and also to separate facts from fiction. Trinidad Rancheria is not running for Fifth District Supervisor.

Ryan Sundberg is a Trinidad Rancheria tribal member, a Native American of Yurok decent and has worked tirelessly to help all Native Americans in Humboldt County and the entire state. Ryan has also worked tirelessly for all Humboldt County residents without any partiality.

Ryan has improved county and tribal relationships since he has been Fifth District Supervisor. It is unfair to position tribe against tribe as Madrone has done.

In his quest to become the next supervisor, Madrone has knowingly promoted untrue statements about Ryan as well as the Trinidad Rancheria. Capitalizing on tribal differences and securing endorsements from large tribes based on inaccurate information shows a lack of integrity. Madrone is making promises to support tribal issues he knows nothing about. How could he be truly representing all tribes fairly when he has not met with Trinidad Rancheria? He is not basing his campaign on facts. I have to wonder what promises he is making?

Madrone has taken credit and has been quoted in the press as being responsible for bringing in over \$10 million for the Trinidad Pier. This is FICTION. Madrone had absolutely nothing to do with securing the grants that were applied for that eventually funded the pier.

The Trinidad Rancheria is an environmental steward and has worked tirelessly to protect the Trinidad Harbor. We, the Trinidad Rancheria, worked with the City of Trinidad to secure the first \$2.5 million in funding that was the leverage point for the entire project.

The Rancheria wrote the grant, the City of Trinidad administered and oversaw the grant. The Rancheria went on to secure grant funding from the Federal Highway Administration, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Tribal Transportation Funding allocated to Trinidad Rancheria annually, as well as the California Coastal Conservancy.

Madrone did not work with the Rancheria or even communicate with the Rancheria during this grant leveraging process. The project did not cost \$10 million. The total funds were

approximately \$8.3 Million. I am appalled that Madrone would embellish and mislead the Fifth District voters and make them believe he was the catalyst behind this effort.

Trinidad Rancheria worked on permitting and securing funding for this project for over five years. This pier is owned and operated by Trinidad Rancheria for the entire community. Don't be misled by Madrone's political statements regarding all of his accomplishments.

Another one of Madrone's favorite topics is the Trinidad Rancheria Interchange. He has not participated in any of the community meetings held, has not been willing to meet with the Rancheria to discuss the project, and is misleading the Fifth District voters once again. His statements are fiction!

Fact: The Rancheria gave up Tribal Lands in the late 1960s in order for U.S. Highway 101 to be built. Unfortunately, the tribe did not receive direct access to its property as part of this project. The Rancheria lost over 12 acres on the other side of the freeway as a result. This became a social justice issue for the Tribe and has become its highest priority project.

Fact: Since 2001, the Trinidad Rancheria has completed several planning studies in order to study safe accessibility to the Trinidad Rancheria and the surrounding areas, and to investigate alternatives that would provide improved access for current and future needs. Since 2012, a Project Development Team (PDT) has met to guide the project through the project development process. This PDT team has been instrumental to date in developing the purpose and need for the project and preparing the project to reach this stage. The PDT team will continue to play a key role in guiding the project through to completion.

Fact: The Tribe has spent in excess of \$1,230,060 of its own funding on this project. Recently the tribe received \$775,000 in Advanced Project Development Element Funds which will enable the Tribe to begin the environmental phase of the project. It is in this environmental phase that each and every alternative will be explored, put under the microscope and the community will have every opportunity to weigh in and voice their concerns. There are approximately 11 different alternatives. As you know, the CEQA – NEPA process does not allow one alternative to rise above another alternative until there has been a complete hearing process.

Rumors are being circulated by Madrone that this project doesn't address the needs of the entire community. This is fiction!

Humboldt County Public Works Director Tom Mattson has gone on record saying that we must address the unstable conditions that exist on Scenic Drive. One major earthquake will shut down ingress and egress to all homes throughout all of Scenic Drive. The Rancheria wants to bring this discussion to the community. What can be done? There must be an alternative access route.

Madrone wants to shut down a project he has not been a part of, has not worked on for 10 years. He wants to tout community solutions but hasn't worked to bring any solutions. The Rancheria has.

Ryan Sundberg is keenly aware of conflicts of interest with this project and has recused himself in his role on the HCAOG Board. Madrone should roll up his sleeves and share his solutions instead of trying to kill the only project that may be viable. Moving the project forward, to bring the actual project to the community, to provide an avenue for community

involvement and understanding of project, and bringing forward preferred solutions, would show responsible leadership.

So, I encourage all voters and interested community members to not take statements at face value, but to do your homework. Madrone's slogan "it's time for a change" is misguided and misleading. He doesn't have a clue as to the work that has been done, he has tried to take credit for work he hasn't done, and he is making promises to the Fifth District that he cannot deliver. Fact or Fiction... You decide!

**Garth Sundberg, Tribal Chairman
Trinidad Rancheria**