



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

**JUL 15 2014**

Ms. Cheryl Schmit  
P.O. Box 355  
Penryn, California 95663

Dear Ms. Schmit:

This letter is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated May 7, 2014, that the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) received on May 29, 2014. You requested copies of documents pertaining to the group known as the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Petitioner #158), specifically any available "executive summary" and its "initial letter" of intent to petition for Federal acknowledgment under 25 CFR Part 83.

We have examined our records and are enclosing copies of various documents which are responsive to your request. Since you are considered an "other requestor," the cost is broken down as follows: one quarter hour of managerial search time at \$15.25 per 1/4 hour or \$15.25. You are entitled to the first two hours of search time at no cost. No cost is being charged for managerial review. The duplication of 6 images at \$0.15 per page is \$.90; however, you are entitled to the first 100 copies at no cost. Therefore, the fee for providing copies of these 6 images is less than \$50.00. Therefore, you are not being charged for any of the costs in accordance with 43 CFR 2.16(b)(2).

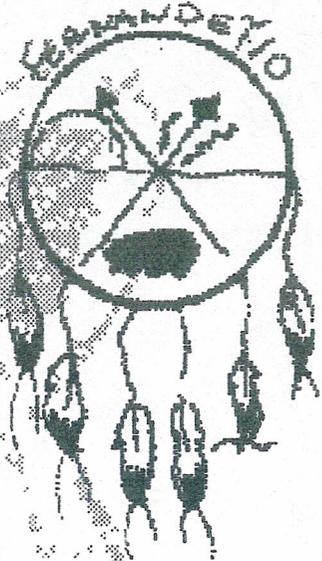
Should you have any questions regarding this response, please contact me at (202) 513-7650.

Sincerely,

Director, Office of Federal Acknowledgment



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APR 24 1995  
BAR



11640 Rincon Avenue  
Sylmar, CA 91342  
April 17, 1995

**To whom it may concern:**

The Governing Council of the Fernandeno/Tataviam Tribe would like become Federally recognize. The tribe is located in the San Fernando Valley, Northeast Area of Los Angeles County.

We would appreciated all the information in regards to this matter. If you need to contact us we can be reached at (818) 361-0680. Thank you in advance for all your assistance:

Sincerely,

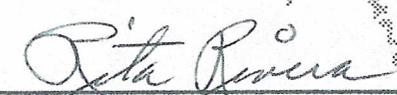
**Fernandeno/Tataviam Tribal Council**

  
Chief Little Bear (Edward A. Ortega)

  
Spiritual Leader Standing Bear (Rudy J. Ortega Jr.)

  
Elder Jimmy Ortega

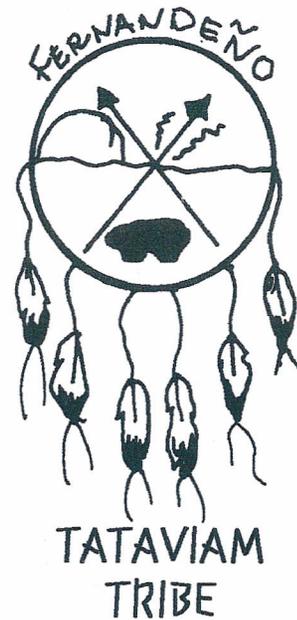
  
Elder Joe Ortega

  
Elder Rita Rivera

  
Elder Ted Garcia



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1/16/96  
BAR



**Fernandeno/Tataviam Tribal Council**  
11640 Rincon Avenue  
Sylmar, California 91342-5455

December 18, 1995

To whom it may concern:

The Governing Council of the Fernandeno/Tataviam Tribe has prepared this petition in order that our tribe would become Federally recognized. The red booklet enclosed has all the necessary information on the Fernandeno/Tataviam Tribe and their history. Also there are two follow up stories on the history of "Rancho Los Encino's"; by Russell Kimura, a California State Park Ranger and by John Elliott.

We have also packaged all the members and their families information of our tribe, to which you will find easily filed. There are support letters from our City Council men and other Native Americans, enclosed with the package.

We would appreciate if there is any information that needs further attention to this matter, to contact us where we can be reach at (818) 361-0680. Thank you in advance for all your assistance.

Sincerely,

Chief Little Bear  
Chief Little Bear

Spiritual Leader Standing Bear  
Spiritual Leader Standing Bear

Elder Jimmy Ortega  
Elder Jimmy Ortega

Elder Joe Ortega  
Elder Joe Ortega

Elder Ted Garcia  
Elder Ted Garcia

Elder Rita Riviera  
Elder Rita Riviera



Larry J. Ortega Sr.  
Tribal President

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NOV 6 9 2009  
ASIA-OFA

November 2, 2009

Assistant Secretary Larry Echo Hawk  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk,

The Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Band), Petitioner #158, seeks final determination of federal recognition through the Department of Interior's procedures under Part 83 of Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations (25 CFR Part 83) and respectfully submits this supplement to its petition in consideration of recognition.

My father, Rudy Ortega Sr., made it his life's work to gain rights and recognition for our people. Appointed captain by community consensus in the early 1950s, he was elected chief of the Band in 1971 and lead with dignity until his passing in August of this year. We continue his legacy to attain recognition and rights for our citizens.

The Band deserves federal recognition now. The Band has established a record of external recognition, demonstrated community continuity, and was previously recognized by federal officials as coming within the jurisdiction of the United States and entitled to the federal government's protection and benefits. Accordingly, the Band's petition must be reviewed under 25 C.F.R. § 83.8 with a date of previous acknowledgment of 1904.

On April 24, 1995 the tribe submitted a letter of intent to seek recognition and on January 16, 1996, submitted a request for technical assistance (TA). On March 3, 1997 the Band received a TA letter from the Department of Interior and request for response. The petition supplement submitted herein contains a response to that letter<sup>1</sup>, including documents that demonstrate previous acknowledgement of the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians by the United States. By virtue of this acknowledgement, the Band is entitled to review under 25 CFR § 83.8.

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<sup>1</sup> FT OFA Technical Response.pdf

# 11/08

of San Fernando, toiling as laborers, semi-skilled workers, and ranch hands. Despite the displacement and adverse effects of land loss and encroaching settlement, we have endured.

Along with this letter, you'll find one paper copy of the petition accompanied by three USB drives, each containing a copy of the petition and its supporting documentation. Should you have any questions in accessing this information please contact our Tribal Administrator, Rudy Ortega, Jr. at (818) 837-0794 ext. 201 or email at (rortega@tataviam.us).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Ortega', written over a horizontal line.

Larry Ortega  
Tribal President  
Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

cc: The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, House of Representatives  
The Honorable Howard Berman, House of Representatives



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NOV 09 2009  
ASIA-OFA

## **2009: FEDERAL RECOGNITION NOW: A Social and Political History of the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians**

The Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Band) deserves federal recognition now. The Band has continued as a kinship-based social and political group from the 1700s to present. The Band was previously recognized at least as recently as 1892 when a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney recommended that the federal government take action to Fernandeano land rights. Federal recognition is long overdue and it is time for the United States to correct a terrible injustice that the Fernandeano Tataviam Mission Indians have endured for over 150 years.

### *The Pre-Mission and Mission Periods*

In the pre-Mission period, before 1797, the Band's ancestors formed into villages comprised of a single patrilineal lineage for the Takic speaking Tongva and Tataviam ancestors, and a matrilineal lineage among the Chumash ancestors. These lineages are: Chaguayabit, Cabuepet, Tujubit, and Suitcabit. Each lineage had a headman or leader, assistants, and ceremonial leaders. The women also had political and ceremonial ranks within each lineage. The lineages held territory, engaged in collective economic and ceremonial activity, and intermarried with other lineage groups of different dialects and languages to establish a complicated regional network of kinship, economic, and ceremonial ties.

The social and cultural ties and organization of the lineages established in the pre-mission period continued through the mission period from 1797 to 1846. While living at San Fernando Mission, the Band's ancestors adapted to mission life, nominally accepted Christianity, learned and took up new work skills within the mission economy, retained their traditional languages, and maintained many aspects of traditional social, ceremonial, and political life within the mission.

### *Dispossession: Land Rights and Community Survival*

Between 1847 and 1885, the ancestors of the Band received, held and were then dispossessed of Mexican land grants at Encino, Cahuenga, Tujunga, Rocha's grant, and Sikwanga, all located near the old Mission San Fernando on land formerly held in trust for the Indians by the Catholic Church. The dispossessions were illegal under Mexican law, which preserved land and village government for Mission Indians. Through the early American period the Fernandeanos lost additional land, and were forced to enter the American economy. In particular, the Fernandeano dispossession is highlighted by the famous case of Rogerio Rocha, Captain of the San Fernando Mission Indians (1852-1904), and his ultimate eviction from his land. Unfortunately, while a special U.S. Attorney requested it in one

instance, the federal government did nothing to protect the Fernandeños from the attacks on their land or the impacts of settlement and economic and political forces on their communities. Treaties, legislation, and court cases contributed to the failure of the United States to take up trust responsibility and protect Fernandeño land. Notwithstanding the displacement and other adverse effects of the land losses and effects of settlement, the Band maintained its social and political structures.

Between 1886 and 1951, the Band members lived in a highly discriminatory environment that discouraged use of Indian languages, the expression of Native identity and culture, promoted segregated living patterns, and discouraged actions to uphold band land and political rights. The community gathered and lived during this period in the old section of the city of San Fernando, a couple of miles east of the San Fernando Church grounds. Most worked as laborers, semi-skilled workers, and ranch hands. The San Fernando Mission Indians maintained organization and political leadership patterns based on lineage groups, and regional ties to related lineages in the area. After the Captain Rogerio Rocha passed in 1904, Antonio Maria Ortega was recognized as Captain by 1910, because he spoke the Tataviam language, and had considerable cultural and historical knowledge of the community.

#### *Nation Building and Cultural Renewal*

From 1952 to 2002, the Band retained the traditional political relations comprised of a coalition of cooperating lineages. The community met quarterly at family gatherings, while the adults, men and women, discussed political, social, and mutual help issues. The assembly of adult members came to comprise the general council and has had considerable power. Rudy Ortega, the grandson of Antonio Maria Ortega, was appointed Captain by community consensus in the early 1950s. In the 1971, Rudy Ortega was elected chief of the Band. Between the late 1940s and 1972, the Band considered American-style bylaws. In 1972 the Band formed a non-profit organization to apply for grants and carry on community benefit activities. In 1975 the band adopted new bylaws, creating a board of members and nonmembers to advise the Captain, while the General Council was not in session. The leadership engaged in a variety of community building activities, held cultural and community events, sought to protect indigenous rights, sought California and federal recognition, and worked to recover history, genealogy, and cultural knowledge within the community. In 2002 the Band adopted a constitution.

#### *The Contemporary Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians*

For the past decade, the community residence patterns, political organization, and the continuity of the base coalition of lineages that form the community and general council. Contemporary life consists of community organization and benefit activities, efforts to recover land, efforts to gain federal recognition, cultural renewal of ceremonies, recovering language, relations with local government, local politicians, community agencies and organizations. The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians is one of those indigenous communities that will persist into the indefinite future whether the United States government recognizes them or not. The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians have demonstrated significant external recognition, community continuity and identity for over two centuries, and a long and consistent stream of recognized leaders and community-based political process. Larry Ortega is the current President.

The Band deserves recognition as an Indian tribe from the federal government; now.