

the local and state economy. For a number of years now, the California spaceport has rallied strong support from the pro-development lobby in Sacramento: including big business, the Republican state caucus, local chambers of commerce, state senators and elected officials from nearby cities. Archaeological and anthropological firms specializing in studies of native California sites are also cited on this webpage, because their research provides the base line data used for making development decisions.

You can see the promotional webpage of the California Spaceport by clicking on the link called Spaceport Homepage.

Seldom has the national mass media informed the public about the local Indian opposition (on both environmental and spiritual grounds) to the development of the California Spaceport on their ancestral lands. Exceptions to this pattern, of newspaper neglect of these issues, are cited below.

Since local and state newspapers and television stations (the majority of which are owned by pro-growth corporations) have also neglected discussion of this controversial topic, this webpage is designed to provide basic information about articles and other sources of information on the rapidly developing commercial spaceports and related native American issues.

(John Anderson, 11/10/98)

The Haley and Wilcoxon Article

Dr. Brain Haley and Larry Wilcoxon published a controversial article on the Chumash Indians and their sacred shrine at Point Conception. This article appeared in the journal of *Current Anthropology* in December 1997.

Haley and Wilcoxon acknowledged that their research on the Chumash Indians and their relations to Point Conception was partially paid for by the aerospace industry which was building the California Spaceport nearby on the Vandenberg Air Force Base.¹

The authors present a critique of Chumash traditionalism in this article and question the legitimacy of the greater Point Conception area as a rightfully protected historical site under existing guidelines for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Haley and Wilcoxon charge that ALL contemporary Chumash Indians hold "modern" beliefs, which do not have continuity with their ancestral religion and culture.²

1 See footnote one of the Haley/Wilcoxon article for further information.

2 (Haley/Wilcoxon, *Current Anthropology*, 790).

Quotes from this article, along with quotes from Dr. John Johnson, have appeared in local newspaper articles which raised questions in the public's mind about the legitimacy of some Chumash families to 'authentic' native status. These same newspapers have also used Haley and Wilcoxon's findings to raise questions about the legal rights of contemporary Chumash bands (other than the Santa Ynez Reservation) to seek protection of the Point. As always in the past, lack of federal recognition for the non-reservation Chumash makes it difficult for them to participate as equals with the reservation Chumash.

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Commentary: This article is quite long. I would describe it as obtuse in argumentation, filled with academic jargon influenced by post-modern anthropological nihilism, and therefore difficult to decipher. But you should judge it for yourself. Copies of this article are available in most university and college libraries, and can usually be ordered at your local library through inter-library loan.

One of the pivotal questions in this article, in the context of future spaceport operations and expansion, is Haley and Wilcoxon's definition of the term 'modern'. They claim, for example, that "the entire category of Chumash is modern" (766) in the same section in which they deny that the larger area around Point Conception "qualifies as a traditional cultural property" under the guidelines now used to protect historic sites (766).

Proponents of spaceport and other commercial expansion in the greater Point Conception region will, of course, welcome such academic conclusions since a completely modern social group cannot make claims under existing laws which protect older sites. For further commentary on this article, see [Haley-Wilcoxon](#).

ALLOGAN SLAGLE

For current information on federal and laws protecting native Californian sites, I would suggest that the reader consult the writings of Allogan Slagle in *News From Native California*. Slagle provides thoughtful assessment of the legal rights of native Californians, like the Chumash, who are seeking to protect their religious, archaeological, and historic sites. Slagle is a (Cherokee) attorney active in cases involving federal relations with native Americans. Slagle serves as the (California) project director for the Special Association of American Indian Affairs' Federal Acknowledgment Project.

Slagle urges his readers to look beyond debates over existing laws impacting native sites like Point Conception, and consider larger questions facing a just society. He wrote back in 1993, for example: "As part of its historic trust responsibility, the federal government has the obligation to enact enforceable federal policies which will protect Native American community

and tribal vitality and cultural integrity, and which will not inhibit or interfere with the free exercise of Native American religions" (*News From Native California*, Summer 1993, page 50).

See [Slagle](#) for further information.

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

This controversial front page article is entitled "Point of Contention." It included a large photograph of the Point Conception area, showing the lighthouse near the sacred Chumash shrine. The text next to the photo reads: "Two authors revive a bitter fight by questioning the validity of a Chumash legend and even the ancestry of some people who say they're Chumash."

(Melinda Burns, staff writer, December 26, 1997, page A1)

For more information on this article, see [News-Press](#)

VENTURA STAR FREE PRESS

The title for this article was "Chumash Beliefs Questioned: Experts say Point Conception was never gate to afterworld." The article states feelings were strong over the Haley/Wilcoxon article which the paper claims t;cast doubt on the myth of the Western Gate and the very ancestry of some of the people who believe in it." (January 23, 1998, page A21)

MIKE KHUS ARTICLE

Khus published an article discussing Chumash concerns about the California Spaceport to *News From Native California*, fall 1998 edition. Mike's family affiliations are with the San Luis Obispo area Chumash. He has a master's degree from Stanford University, and is active in the Chumash Coastal Band. See [Khus](#) for further information on this article. See [News](#) for further information on this journal.

JOHN ANDERSON

The article "California's Commercial Spaceport Rises On Native Land" appeared as a feature story in the fall 1998 edition of *Earth Island Journal*. This journal is published by Earth Island Institute, which supports efforts to counteract threats to the biological and cultural diversity that sustains the environment. See [Spaceport](#) for further information on this article.

I will also present commentary on the importance of Point Conception as a Traditional Chumash religious site, in chapter six of a new book which will be called "Kuta Teachings" (to be released). For further information see [Kuta Teachings](#)

CHUMASH TRADITIONALISM

The Coastal Band had the largest Chumash membership of any Chumash group at the time of the Haley/Wilcoxon publication. Some of members of this band, from an extended family which is very active in the band's administrative organization, are classified by Haley/Wilcoxon

as descendants of Mexican soldiers and servants brought into the Chumash region by imperialistic Spain (767). This classification is based on the presumed accuracy of colonial (mission) records and the degree to which they should be relied upon as evidence of Chumash authenticity. The practices of many native American groups has been to use written documentation as only part of their evidence and to define their membership by additional criteria including social and religious participation in their culture.

Chumash Traditionalism: Haley and Wilcoxon identify the Coastal Band as "the core" of the Chumash Traditionalist movement, led by a "a group of extended kin from Santa Barbara" (767). It is my impression from communications with Chumash from other bands that they disagree with Haley and Wilcoxon's characterization of Chumash Traditionalism, which they believe is present in all of the bands. Contact other Chumash bands for information on their Traditional membership. See [Chumash Groups](#) for a partial list of addresses for Chumash bands and organizations.

At this time, the Coastal Band is the only Chumash group maintaining a webpage on the net. See [Coastal Band](#) for further information on the activities of this large Chumash band.

ACADEMIC REBUTTALS TO HALEY/WILCOXON

The 1998 fall edition of the journal of *Current Anthropology* featured responses to Haley & Wilcoxon's 1997 article. Commentators included: Jon Erlandson, Chester King, Diana Wilson, Eugene Ruyle, Lilliam Robles, Chris Wood, and Robert Winthrop.

I would describe these "replies to Haley and Wilcoxon" (editor's subtitle) as informative and bristling with indignation. And I was surprised at what I would describe as Haley and Wilcoxon's unapologetic reply to these critics. They charge, for example, that six out of the seven commentators showed "defensive" reactions (502). They blamed the five anthropologists "who criticize us" as guilty of "denials of history, misinterpretations, and flawed methodologies" (502). They characterize their critics for showing "misplaced post-colonial concerns" (502). They charge, furthermore, that their critics demonstrate "little grasp of the processes through which people form ideas about their history, identity, heritage, and tradition" (502).

Jon Erlandson's opening reply sets the tone for the fall 1998 response to Haley/Wilcoxon. Erlandson charged that "Haley and Wilcoxon present a grossly oversimplified picture of modern Chumash society as polarized into 'Traditionalist' and 'non-traditionalist' camps (478). "Ultimately, Haley and Wilcoxon's argument that the sacredness of Point Conception may have been limited to a small group of people is unconvincing..."(480). "I am clearly among those Haley and Wilcoxon consider to be on the wrong side of he tracks" (482). "Haley and Wilcoxon never explicitly divulge that they have a history of relatively contentious relations

with those they label Traditionalists... they are competing for archaeological contracts with some of the very people their analysis impugn" (484).

Lillian Robles is an 82-year-old California Indian (Juaneno/Acjachemen), from the Los Angeles region located south of the Chumash. Robles was "offended" by Haley and Wilcoxon's article (486).

Eugene Ruyle describes Wilcoxon and Haley's article as having a "combative, debunking tone" (491).

Robert Winthrop states that in his fifteen years of experience working with native American communities, he had "never encountered a case that resembled the Point Conception controversy"(496).

Chris Wood criticized Haley and Wilcoxon for their heavy emphasis on "textual evidence" (written documents from Euro-American observers of Chumash affairs). Wood protests that "such evidence is an exceptional and indeed trivial part of the Traditionalist argument" (500).

Anyone interested in Chumash history and culture will find this open and heated academic debate essential reading. My sympathy goes to the critics of Haley and Wilcoxon, but you should examine these fascinating statements for yourself.

A RELATED HALEY/WILCOXON ARTICLE

The *Journal for California and Great Basin Anthropology* reportedly will publish a new Haley and Wilcoxon article, which addresses the ethnohistory of Point Conception.

HYDER AND LEE'S RESEARCH

William Hyder and Georgia Lee maintain a webpage featuring their archaeological research on many Chumash sites in the vicinity of the newly developed Spaceport. Their studies included not only Chumash religious sites located south of Hondo Ridge (and thus within the view area of the Point Conception shrine) but also sites north of the ridge which are more directly impacted by the existing California Spaceport developments. Three of the most important of these sites north of the ridge are Swordfish Cave, Window Cave, and Tranquillon Ridge which is described by Hyder and Lee as "a sacred peak."

The role that Hyder and Lee's research played in the environmental impact report for the Spaceport is unclear at this time. Chumash responses to their findings should play a significant role in future hearings on Spaceport operations. See [Hyder/Lee](#) for further information.

GLASSOW'S RESEARCH

Michael Glassow, a professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, submitted a report to the National Park Service, called "1990 Archaeological Investigations on Vandenberg Air Force Base in Connection with the Development of Space Transportation System Facilities.

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O'CONNOR'S ARTICLE

Mary O'Connor was the principal investigator on the Chevron Oil Company pipeline project which cut through the western Chumash territory in the 1980's. O'Connor's article appeared in the *NAPA Bulletin* in 1989 and immediately stirred up controversy. O'Conner brought many of the arguments used by Haley and Wilcoxon to the public's attention, some eight years earlier than Haley/Wilcoxon. She charged that Chumash ethnicity was constructed "almost entirely" by outsiders including local political leaders and developers. "The case of the Chumash demonstrates the power of outside resources to actually construct an ethnic entity where there had been none before"(11).

"The traditional cultural elements of ethnicity, such as language, religion, and values," O'Connor reasoned, "are absent" (15). She argued that members of the Santa Ynez Indian reservation had the most sound basis for claiming authentic Chumash ancestry, while the United Chumash Council [which evolved into the Coastal Band] did not have this status. And she concluded with the observation that the ethnicity of the key families in both groups is "constructed- both arose in response to external stimuli" (17).

THE MOUNT SHASTA CASE

Many native groups and non-natives have been calling for the revision of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

In California, the Pit River Tribe has joined with local non-natives in a struggle to protect native religious and cultural sites on Mount Shasta from negative impacts of a proposed ski resort. See [Shasta](#) for a discussion of this issue. The Save Mount Shasta and the Coalition to Save Mount Shasta are two non-profit groups which fought to protect Mount Shasta for over ten years. Future efforts by the Chumash to protect sites in the general Point Conception region will benefit a great deal from the experience gained by the Shasta participants.

On October 16, 1998 Charles Miller contacted me to announce a breakthrough in the Shasta struggle, which may have a major impact on any efforts that the Chumash chose to make concerning Point Conception. Miller is the lawyer who represented the Shasta groups. In his email he wrote: "In an unprecedented action, the U.S. Forest Service has revoked a permit for the construction of a ski resort on Mt. Shasta because of the Mountain's cultural and sacred significance to northern California Tribes... Never before has a major federal government project or sponsored project been stopped because of its adverse impacts on Native American cultural properties."

Perhaps the lessons learned in the Shasta case can be applied to the California Spaceport situation. It is a very interesting development, and a number of my Chumash contacts confirm that they are watching it closely. I will try to keep readers of this webpage advised of any new developments.

REVISING THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT

In my Jonjonata report to Caltrans and other writings I have spoken for the need to fundamentally reexamine the laws governing protection of native American sites. Many people, both native and non-native have been working on this project for some time now.

In a recent email Brian Haley informed me that he is also working on the problem of revising NHPA. He may publish an article on his recommended revisions, and I will report on his efforts as I learn more .

DIANE HOWARD

Howard's thesis: "The Emergence of an Effective National and International Spaceport Regime of Law", Institute of Air and Space Law, Montreal Canada.

Dated November 2014.

Howard's thesis cited *Kuta Teachings* (Anderson) evidence of Chumash religious sites in the spaceport area and used the Vandenberg spaceport as a point of discussion of future laws for regulating development of spaceports in America. Footnote 655 of this thesis reads: "Haley and Wilcoxin funded their research with compensation provided by the aerospace industry, which was building the California spaceport at Vandenberg. With what appears to be too little, too late, the City of Lompoc in Santa Barbara county, California (home of Vandenberg/ California spaceport) passed resolution No. 5295-05 in 2005. The resolution merely acknowledged the Chumash history in the region and states that the 'Envisioned California Space Center will celebrate the role ' of the Native Americans from the area, but it does not pledge to preserve or maintain any sacred sites."

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