



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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April 28, 2014

Open Letter to the Community of Wilsonia

Dear Community Members:

I want to thank you for the warm welcome as I begin my assignment as Superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. I feel blessed to work in such a beautiful setting and with great partners and communities like Wilsonia. Our national parks belong to the people, and I never forget my high obligation to serve you with exceptional public service and ensuring all visitors feel welcomed to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of their national parks.

Some of you know that I own a cabin in Giant Sequoia National Monument. It has been in my family for three generations and, hopefully, many more to come. The memories of spending summers at the cabin with my family have profoundly influenced me, including my career choice to serve as your superintendent. The experience has taught me to appreciate the importance of cabin communities like Wilsonia and the advocacy you provide in protecting parks and forests for future generations.

In reflecting on the history of Wilsonia and relations with the National Park Service, I understand there are concerns about trust and actions that would undermine the value of your investment – both financially and as a matter of family history and identity. I recognize these concerns and the uncertainty they create for you and your family. Through this open letter, I want to assure you that the National Park Service is committed to working with you to protect your private property rights and preserve the history of Wilsonia as an outstanding example of recreation cabin communities in the Sierra Nevada. This includes working with you, the County of Tulare, and the California State Historic Preservation Office to ensure the history is preserved while adapting to meet contemporary requirements for conservation and public health and safety.

Working together, I believe we can accomplish these interests and ensure Wilsonia remains a vibrant cabin community and reminder of our rich local and national heritage. I am committed to this outcome and look forward to learning how the National Park Service can better support your needs and interests.

Sincerely,

Woody Smeek
Superintendent