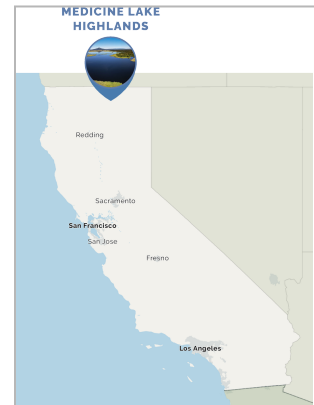




## FACT SHEET: Protect *Sáttítla* Medicine Lake Highlands: A Cultural, Geological, and Ecological Treasure in Need of Protection

Nestled within the Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, and Modoc National Forests of northeastern California, *Sáttítla*, also known as the Medicine Lake Highlands are a culturally significant, geologically unique, and life-sustaining region in need of greater protections. Since time immemorial these Ancestral Homelands of the Pit River people have been held sacred by them and other Tribal Nations including, but not limited to, the Modoc, Shasta, Karuk, and Wintu. The Pit River Nation is underscoring the urgent need to protect these Ancestral Homelands and spiritual sites currently managed by the US Forest Service.

The Pit River Nation has asked President Biden and California's federal delegation to put in place national monument protections for a little more than 200,000 acres in the Medicine Lake Highlands about 30 miles from Mount Shasta.



### Tribal Connections

*Sáttítla* holds countless tribal cultural resources, reflecting the rich history of the region. The Pit River Nation, among others, maintains a deep spiritual connection to the land and water. Indigenous people continue to honor tradition and preserve their cultural identities through a deep spiritual connection and being one with the land and water. The continuous use of the area not only includes practicing Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK), gathering plant and animal materials for food and making ceremonial items, but the natural features also have a deeper spiritual significance connected to the Pit River Nation's creation origin narrative. Pit River families

continue to utilize ceremonial spaces within the region for renewal, naming their children, healing, training, and to experience the high quality of silence.

### Headwaters of California

*Sáttítla* is crucial for the health of millions of people, wildlife, and plants. Serving as one of California's headwaters, the aquifers beneath these lands deliver clean, cold water to Fall River, the state's largest spring system. The freshwater springs not only provide a buffer from increasing drought and climate change but are also key to ensuring enough drinking water for major metropolitan areas downstream and agricultural needs.

## Threats

For decades, the Pit River Nation and allies, including the Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center, have fought to safeguard these Ancestral lands from ongoing threats, including more than two dozen leases issued by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management for large-scale geothermal energy development. Successful legal battles have proven that industrial development in this area is not suitable, emphasizing risks to underground aquifers and the irreversible impacts to cultural and historical sites. Yet, the BLM has yet to take these lands off the table and pending leases remain.



Geothermal power plants, utility lines, clear cutting of the forest, and hydraulic fracturing threaten the sacredness and ecological importance of *Sáttítla's* lands and waters. Development in the national forest would increase traffic, noise, water, and air pollution, threatening a reliable source of pure water for millions of people.

## Proposal for Protection

The Pit River Nation is leading the effort to establish national monument protections for a little more than 200,000 acres of federally managed land in Northern California. Designating *Sáttítla* as a national monument enables federal agencies to collaborate with Tribal Nations to steward and preserve cultural resources and lands.

Many agree with the Pit River Nation that *Sáttítla* must be protected to preserve this sacred place for future generations and to conserve its rich ecological resources.

To do that, there must be action.

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- **The area proposed for protection includes a little more than 200,000 acres in the Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, and Modoc National Forests.**
  - **The Medicine Lake Highlands is known as *Sáttítla* by the Pit River people.**
  - **The national monument would be under the management of the US Forest Service.**
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