

Paiutes close vandalized area of Pyramid Lake

By Susan Voyles, Reno Gazette-Journal

Stone Mother, a well-known tufa rock formation at Pyramid Lake, created the lake with her tears, according to ancient Paiute legends.

Now she's weeping again. Graffiti vandals have left their marks in spray paint on nearby tufa rocks. Broken glass from past drinking parties sparkles in the sunlight.

Sick of the desecration, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Council has closed to the general public the area near Stone Mother and the nearby Pyramid Rock island to motorists as well as boaters on the east side of the lake.

It was not an easy decision, as the tribe depends on permits from more than 150,000 visitors a year who come to the reservation, said Scott Carey, tribal planner. The namesake Pyramid Rock, as well as Stone Mother, also known as the Woman with a Basket, are popular attractions.

The ban on visitors will be enforced while Paiutes find solutions to prevent additional vandalism and promote responsible use of the sacred area, Paiute Chairman Wayne Burke has said.

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