



**AIANTA**  
American Indian Alaska Native  
Tourism Association



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

Partners in Conservation



# California National Historic Trail



# A MASS MIGRATION THROUGH NATIVE LANDS

The story of the California Trail is usually told from the perspective of westward migrants who traveled more than 5,000 miles from Missouri to California. However, the land they crossed was far from empty. The greatest migration in U.S. history is a story of more than 250,000 diverse travelers crossing the ancestral lands of hundreds of Indigenous groups. In Nevada, Indigenous Peoples present during the historic period of the trail, and still connected to the land today, include the Washoe (Waší-šiw), Northern Paiute (Numu), Western Shoshone (Newe), Southern Paiute (Nuwuvi), and Goshute (Kutsipiuti) people.

Indigenous Peoples sometimes guided emigrants across the landscape, one famous example being Captain Truckee, a Numu leader for whom one of the trail routes is named. They also faced and fought against violence from the newcomers. Following forced displacements off their lands, many adapted to foreign lifestyles while preserving as much of their culture as possible. The westward journey along the California Trail has significantly and permanently impacted Indigenous Peoples and the lands they have relied upon for generations. Ideas, goods, foods, nonnative plants and animals, and diseases were among the many things exchanged across deserts, valleys, and mountains. To this day, the impact of the California Trail colors the landscape you see before you, and the ways present-day Indigenous communities manage and experience the land.

## STORYTELLING THROUGH ART

This artwork was selected through a contest to illustrate a more inclusive narrative of the trail—one that tells the story of multiple peoples and perspectives. This poster is a collaboration between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) National Scenic and Historic Trails Program and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA). This partnership aims to promote Indigenous tourism and deepen our understanding of Indigenous cultures, which is crucial to protecting these unique landscapes.

## THE ARTIST

Cassandra Garback is an Indigenous artist born and raised in Nevada, specifically near Pyramid Lake in the Great Basin Desert. The breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage of this region have had a profound impact on her artistic expression. As she immerses herself in the vibrant colors, textures, and stories of this land, she aims to capture its essence through her art. The Great Basin Desert holds a unique beauty, one that is both harsh and delicate, resilient and powerful. Cassandra's artwork reflects the intricate relationship between the land and its people, paying homage to the land itself, ancient traditions, and wisdom passed down through generations. Through her paintings and jewelry, she hopes to convey the deep connection we have with our environment and culture, inspiring others to appreciate and protect the natural world that sustains us all.

"My goal is to transport viewers on a journey through Nevada's diverse heritage, just as the California Trail has done for generations. My hope is that this artwork will encourage viewers to visit the California Trail and its beauty for themselves."

*Cassandra Garback*



Visit the "Native Lands, National Trails" website (<https://pnts.org/new/native-lands-national-trails/>) to learn more about the Native lands that the National Trails System travels through.



To learn more about AIANTA and this partnership, visit:  
<https://www.aianta.org/videos/partnership-development/california-trail-in-nevada/>.