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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICES RELEASES REPORT ON  
WAKASA MONUMENT**

DELTA, UT – On February 4, 2022, the National Park Service released its report on the Wakasa Monument, now sheltered at the Topaz Museum in Delta, Utah. The NPS requested that the report not be released publicly “because this report contains sensitive archaeological/locational information.”

The 60-page report comes after a two-day on-site assessment on November 30 and December 1, 2021, when an NPS team examined the monument at the museum and its original location at the Topaz concentration camp. The report is divided into sections that include background and history, methodology, assessment of the stone known as the Wakasa Monument, assessment of the site where it was originally discovered at the Central Utah Relocation Center (better known as Topaz), and recommendations for the museum’s stewardship of both the monument and the location site.

The Wakasa Monument is named in honor of James Hatsuaki Wakasa (1880 – 1943), who was shot and killed by a military guard while walking his dog at the Topaz concentration camp on April 11, 1943. Military officials ordered the monument--a half-ton stone --to be removed after it was erected by Mr. Wakasa’s fellow prisoners. Its location remained a mystery until its discovery in 2020, partially buried and hidden in plain sight near the Topaz barbed wire fence. Upon publication of its exact location in July 2021, and fearing possible vandalism, the Topaz Museum Board moved the Wakasa Monument from its original location at Topaz so it could be sheltered and protected within the secure courtyard of the Topaz Museum.

Key findings in the NPS report include:

- The stone in the museum’s courtyard has been under a protective covering structure that was removed on the day of the inspection to allow examination of the stone.
- Naturally occurring mineral deposits, lichen and non-living vegetation were noted on the stone.
- Fractures are on the north, south, east, and top of the stone, some of which are surface fractures, while others are deeper. Some may be due to the stone’s geologic formation, some may have developed over time, and some “may have been exacerbated by the stone’s relocation.”

- Two fragments of the stone which were dislodged during its relocation are now in the Topaz Museum.
- At the monument's original site at Topaz, it was noted there is a shallow depression measuring 7' x 7'6" at its widest point, where the excavated area was backfilled after the monument was moved to safety.
- Adjacent to the depression is a cluster of 40-50 fragments of concrete, 10 of which may have originated from the movement of the stone.

NPS recommendations include:

- Construction of a stable base for the shelter protecting the stone and adding ventilation holes in that shelter to further protect the Wakasa Monument in its current location
- Creation and implementation of a site condition monitoring plan at the location where the Wakasa Monument was found
- Stakeholder discussions to determine the interpretation and future of the Wakasa Monument and the Topaz site where it was located

The Topaz Museum Board, legal stewards of the monument and owners of the Topaz incarceration site, is prepared to begin implementation of the NPS recommendations and invites input from the broader Japanese American community and Topaz stakeholders, to determine how to implement them and to plan for the future of the Wakasa Monument as well as a commemoration ceremony in April 2023.

An outreach plan designed to enable interested participants to offer ideas and suggestions will be released soon.

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*The Topaz Museum is located in Delta, Utah, 16 miles from the historic Topaz concentration camp site. The Museum board owns 639 acres of the area where 11,000 people of Japanese ancestry were incarcerated during World War II. Over 10,000 people, including many students, visit it annually. More information can be found at <http://topazmuseum.org>*