



P.O. Box 290, Vacherie, LA 70090-9998
www.sunshineprojectla.com

May 1, 2020

Ms. Sharon Lavigne
RISE St. James
8581 Highway 18
Saint James, LA 70086-7570

Dear Ms. Lavigne,

I am writing in response to your April 21, 2020 letter. First and foremost, FG is respectful of the unmarked burial site located on the former agricultural land that The Sunshine Project now owns. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, high river levels, and for the safety of our workforce and the community, all activities onsite have been paused.

Access to The Sunshine Project property is currently restricted due to safety concerns, some of which you have raised yourself in connection with third-party activities on the property during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we were somewhat surprised by the timing of your request. It is with your safety and others' safety in mind that we must deny your request to visit FG property at this time.

With the oversight of and coordination by the appropriate governmental agencies, FG has respectfully and properly followed all applicable procedures in researching and identifying the unmarked burial site on our property. In coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), archaeologists identified through historic maps only two potential unmarked burial sites on the property: (1) the Buena Vista site, which FG has fenced in and protected within the boundary of its property (the remainder of Buena Vista, which the archaeologists note likely extends onto neighboring agricultural property, which FG does not own, has not been fenced); and (2) the possible Acadia site, on which no evidence of burials has been found.

FG will continue to work with the appropriate governmental agencies to properly address the respectful preservation of the remains at the Buena Vista site, and we hope to be able to learn more about the identities of the deceased persons, if possible, as well as the identities of any living relatives.

With respect to this point, we note that you refer to the unmarked burials at the Buena Vista site as your ancestors; however, as you know, no archaeologist has been able to make any affirmative conclusion about the identity or ethnicity of the remains that FG discovered on the property. There were no grave markers and the various archaeologists have speculated that the remains could be African American or could be from the Civil War. (See TerraXplorations, Inc. Final Report, June 2019 at p. 18.) One archaeologist also reported that Chinese immigrant workers were brought in to work on Buena Vista Plantation. (See CEI report at page 65.) Because of the uncertainty regarding who is buried at the Buena Vista site (or even the ethnicity of the burials), we are unable to identify any living relatives at this time.

If you have any documents or specific information which shows that the unmarked burials at the Buena Vista site are your ancestors, we would really appreciate your sharing it with us.

Lastly, we note that you and your organization are a party in several lawsuits adverse to FG, and we are concerned about continued communication from you outside of the proper channels. You initiated these lawsuits, which include allegations about Buena Vista. In light of these lawsuits, we request that you direct further communication to FG through counsel in the respective lawsuits.

Sincerely,

Janile Parks
Director of Community and Government Relations