



Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

DAM LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

The Klamath Basin Economic Recovery Act seeks to balance the many interests in the basin-SEE STORY ON PAGE 2



Legislation proposed to fix the river

The Klamath Economic Restoration Act introduced recently in the US Senate by Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley and in the House by California Congressman Mike Thompson deserves prompt Congressional action, said a growing group of bi-partisan supporters. A dilating and diverse coalition representing tens of thousands of people including, ranchers, fishermen, Tribes, business owners, and conservationists say the Act's collaborative solutions will end the ongoing water crises hurting Klamath communities that still have double digit unemployment figures.

Klamath Economic Recovery Act supporters stress that many livelihoods are at stake and now is the time to settle long-standing water rights disputes and avoiding catastrophes such as the 2001 water shut-off, 2002 fish kill, and the 2006 commercial salmon fishing closure.

"When disaster hit and litigation got drawn out, we were challenged by elected officials to develop our own solutions to the water crises that have devastated our communities," said Steve Kandra, Klamath Basin farmer. "Together we did it and we're part of a strong and growing constituency that expects our elected officials to seize this opportunity to end the Klamath Crisis."

"THE RIVER IS OUR LIFELINE."

Thomas O'Rourke Sr. ~ Yurok Tribal Chairman



Yurok Tribal Member Sam Gensaw III flicks algae from his net, an arduous process that will become a thing of the past if the dams come out.

The legislation's bi-partisan recommendations are based on the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and Klamath Hydroelectric Agreements, companion documents that were developed by farming, fishing, tribal and environmental groups with support from both the Bush and Obama administrations as well as Governors Brown, Schwarzenegger, Kitzhaber, and Kulongoski.

Jeff Mitchell, lead negotiator for the Klamath Tribes noted, "This bill is a marked departure from past attempts by one

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On The Cover

Iron Gate Dam is the first of a series of four fish-blocking dams on the Klamath River.



Yurok Tribal Member Georgiana Myers gives a speech about dam removal in Portland.

interest group to strong arm one another. Instead we've set aside ideological debates and focused on protecting everyone's interests collectively. It's exactly the type of win-win policy Congress should embrace."

The legislation authorizes the Administration to carry out economic development and restoration activities laid out in the Klamath Settlement Agreements. It also provides the Secretary of the Interior with the authority to determine whether four aging dams should be removed. The Agreements are designed to provide security to commercial fishing and agricultural economies that when healthy are worth more than \$750 million a year to the region, and employ thousands of people in rural areas suffering from high unemployment.

"This Congress has the opportunity to solve the Klamath Crisis. Failure to act will mean more lost jobs and a continuation of the economic insecurity that is destroying our rural communities," said Becky Hyde, an Upper Basin rancher.

A restored river has other positive impacts that are invaluable.

"The river is our lifeline. When the river is unhealthy, we as a people become unhealthy," said Yurok Chairman Thomas O'Rourke Sr. " Dam Removal will be the first step

toward healing the river, which will in turn heal the environment and it will heal us as a people."

Reflecting on the challenges of working with Congress, Glen Spain, representing the commercial fishing industry emphasized: "Our rural communities simply can't afford to do nothing. That's a recipe for another round of catastrophes like the fish kill and irrigation shut-off. We desperately need Congress to act now."

Editor's Notes

Link to draft bill: http://www.klamathrestoration.org/images/stories/pdfs/11-8-11_Klamath_Legislation_Draft_END11921.pdf

For more on the most recent federal and state dam removal environmental analysis and federal and state decision-making process, see: www.klamathrestoration.gov

For a full list of supporting agencies, organizations and governments go to: <http://www.klamathrestoration.org/restoration-partners.html>

And <http://www.KBRAequalsjobs.com>

All the four Klamath hydropower dams combined have generated only a very small amount of power – only about 82 Megawatts (MW) on average over the past fifty years. According to estimates by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the federal agency that licenses dams, after expensive retrofitting to meet modern standards, these dams would then only generate about 62 MW of power on average, or about 27% less than they do today. FERC itself estimated in its 2007 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) on relicensing that even if fully FERC relicensed, the required retrofitting would be so expensive that these dams would then operate at more than a \$20 million/year net loss (see FERC FEIS, Table 4-3 on pg. 4-2).

The November 2007 FERC Final EIS is available online at: http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/File_list.asp?document_id=13555784

It can also be found by a FERC docket search at www.ferc.gov through their eLibrary, Docket No. P-2082-027 posted November 16, 2007, Doc. No. 20071116-4001. ✖

Tribe, Park work to restore beargrass

A team representing the Yurok Tribe and Redwood National Park ambled up a hillside covered in a tangled mess of downed thigh-thick trees en route to a special ridge on a crisp fall morning.

The young trees were felled as part of a Park project to restore a portion of forest devastated by clear cuts. The stand of trees is located on the Bald Hills — Yurok ancestral land. The National Park recently located a spindly but substantial patch of beargrass (haa-moh), a fibrous plant Yuroks use to make everything from designs on water-tight baskets to ceremonial regalia, and in a joint management approach met to discuss how to renew the ecosystem in a way that benefits wildlife and several symbiotic cultural uses.

The Park is efficient at rehabilitating forest land for the sake of trees, but lacks knowledge and experience when it comes to healing an entire ecosystem, which in the Yurok world view includes humans. Yurok Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer Bob McConnell, Cultural Resources Manager Buffy McQuillen and Environmental Program Cultural Resources Specialist Rosie Clayburn were asked how to best reinvigorate wildlife habitat and maximize cultural resources in the area.

“What this area needs is a good burn. This ecosystem needs fire to flourish,” said McConnell. “That is something our people have known for time immemorial.”

There is another important aspect about this special spot. Yuroks have set fire to it for an untold number of centuries. The oaks left standing after logging show clear evidence the area had been burned consistently prior to European contact.

“There is no doubt that this ridge was used to cultivate cultural resources,” McConnell said and the Park’s fire manager agreed after looking at the healed over fire marks on the tan oak trees.

The general area was also a topic in a book about Northern California Basket Weavers Lila O’Neal, a non-Indian, wrote several decades ago.

Yurok people have thousands of years of forest management experience and it is only just recently that



Beargrass is an essential material used in traditional and contemporary Yurok basketry. This clump is part of a patch recently relocated in the Park.

non-Indian forest managers have begun to accept native fire science as an essential stewardship tool. Years of fire suppression has actually harmed the forest, created the potential for dangerous fires and decimated the production of important cultural resources like beargrass. The beargrass patch lost its vitality because of the lack of fire.

Low-intensity fires do more than benefit the culturally important plant. The burns reduce fuels that cause catastrophic forest fires — another reason Yuroks intentionally set fires — that kill large trees. Older, bigger trees are an essential component of climate control for the planet and are less likely to burn out of control. The fires also disrupt the life-cycle of a weevil that destroys acorns, another important cultural resource.

Fire-managed beargrass appears in large clumps at mid-

**“WHAT THIS AREA NEEDS IS A GOOD BURN.
THIS ECOSYSTEM NEEDS FIRE TO FLOURISH.”**

Bob McConnell~ THPO

elevation in cool northwest forests. Its blades can reach up to four and half feet tall. The flower stocks, which create small vanilla-white flowers, can reach up to six feet. When light fire passes over it a growth mechanism kicks into gear, which make the plant grow back much thicker. The new shoots sprouting from the center of the burned over plant are prized by basket weavers and regalia makers for their pliability, and cannot be produced by any other method than being burned.

Deer, bear and elk love to eat beargrass flower stocks. Beargrass is also a foundational plant of the mid-elevation ecosystem. Its flowers are one of the few sources of pollen in an area that lacks an abundance of the life-giving substance.

In late summer, Yurok people harvest the inner shoots from each plant. When the long narrow leaves are dried in the sun they become an unmistakable, rich cream color.

By the end of the ridge discussion the Redwood National Park team was in agreement that they want to use fire to restore this section of Bald Hills forest and the cultural resources.

“I am ready to start at 6am tomorrow morning,” McConnell said, only half joking.

There is still a lot of red tape that has to be sorted before this forest area will be returned to the highly productive state it was in under Yurok care. Funding must be located, a crew must be put together and safety plans need to be prepared to ensure the right type of burn.

“We are prepared to work with the park on every step of the way and provide all of the assistance that we can,” McConnell concluded. ❖

Congrats David Gensaw Sr. !



Requa District Representative David Gensaw Sr. addresses his constituents. Councilman Gensaw began his second term on December 1.

Community Yurok Language Class Schedule

Weitchpec Tribal Office-Advanced Class-Tuesdays 4pm-5pm

Weitchpec Tribal Office-Community Class-Tuesdays 5pm-6pm

Klamath Tribal Office-Community Class-Tuesdays-5-7





Tribe hosts fun events

The Yurok Tribe's Social Services Department recently hosted two community events in the Klamath Area. The first was the Tribal Community Fall Feast and Wellness Gathering. The second event was the Dell Arte Company's 28th Annual Holiday Show: The Nut Caper A Nutcracker Tail. Both of these events were designed to bring the community together during the holiday season and to provide fun, healthy family activities.

The Social Services Education Departments, Tribal Court and Tribal Council sponsored the events.

The Tribal Community Fall Feast and Wellness Gatherings included a Turkey and deer meat dinner, cultural storytelling, demonstrations, rock n' roll trivia and free family portraits. This event was a mechanism for bringing the community together as well as engaging the youth in prevention activities through the Yurok Youth Program. The feast incorporated groups of teens from KRECR and Del Norte High to help with decorating, serving and cooking. Youth were paired with adult mentors and learned important life skills through their community service, and participation in educational and cultural activities.

These photo spread is just a handful of the free family portraits. ❄



1. Erika and Christopher Peters

2. Betty Weldon and Auhna Reyes-Roberts.

3. (left to right) Nauquel, Larry and Moreck Nova.

4. Kokonow C. and Jasmine W. Kinney.

5. (Front) Darvin Ervin Davis IV and Salena Norris.

6. (left to right) Sam Gensaw III, Jon-Luke Gensaw, Paul Gensaw and Josh Severns.



State seeks new permit for Red Mountain

The California Department of General Service's is attempting to secure a permit to expand a radio communications complex atop Red Mountain, a historical and contemporary Yurok ceremonial place.

The California Department is seeking the Yurok Tribe's consent to ask the U.S. Forest Service to amend its Forest Management Plan for the area, which must happen before a new license can be granted.

Red Mountain is part of the Helkau Historic District, which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Helkau District is a series of high ceremonial sites in the Blue Creek watershed. It was established as a result of the Gasquet-Orleans Road debacle, which came about in the late 70s after the Forest Service attempted to construct a road

for logging companies from Gasquet in eastern Del Norte County to Orleans in eastern Humboldt County. The Forest Service improperly executed the project in the Helkau area which directly and adversely affected Chimney Rock, Peak 8 and several other religious prayer sites which include Red Mountain.

Members of all of the local tribes' fought the road on every available front. Following a decade of fighting to stop the project, which included acts of civil disobedience executed concurrently with strong, but unsuccessful litigation that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, the area was eventually protected after the passage of

the California Wilderness Act.

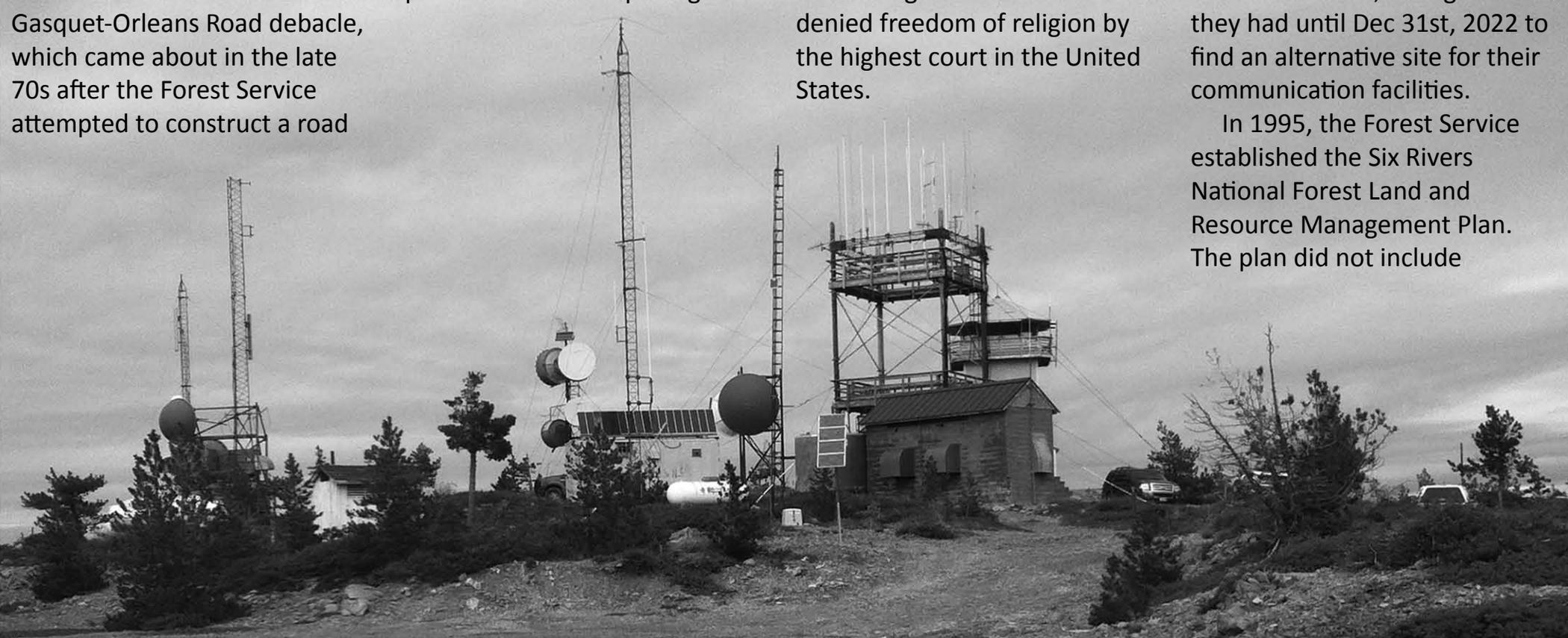
During the G-O Road controversy, the U.S. Forest Service commissioned a number of exhaustive ethnographic and archeological studies on the area. The reports concluded that the "most effective management technique would be the prevention of interference with Native American religious activities by prohibiting those activities that would bring physical harm to the sites...no permanent Forest Service or other government installation be established in the vicinity of any of these sites."

With the Wilderness Act, Tribes gained a new tool for protecting religious freedom after being defeated and denied freedom of religion by the highest court in the United States.

The Forest Service set forth actions to protect the cultural, archaeological, historical and religious sites within the Historic District. But, by this time the G-O Road and Red Mountain had already been impacted by unauthorized development. The first structure built on Red Mountain was a fire lookout in 1920. In the 1940s an airstrip was carved out of the west side of the peak. Radio communications commenced in 1955.

In 1993 the Forest Service signed a Term Special Use Permit for the use of .06 acres which is will expire in 2022. Also, in 1993, the USFS issued 30-year leases for the site and sent a notice to all of its users, telling them they had until Dec 31st, 2022 to find an alternative site for their communication facilities.

In 1995, the Forest Service established the Six Rivers National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The plan did not include



Red Mountain as a telecommunications site because of the information learned from Yurok elders and traditional religious leaders during the G-O Road battle with the USFS.

The Office of General Services came to the Tribe in 1996, but did not speak formally to the Tribal Council, Cultural Resource personnel or traditional religious leaders and practitioners. By 1995 all parties involved were seeking alternative site locations to Red Mountain but in the end opted to wait out the years due to costs in the 1990s. Red Mountain was and is looked at as the best option for communications because of its high elevation which offers extensive coverage. However, a communication weakness at Red Mountain is that it does not provide 100% coverage.

The U.S. Forest Service, which is in charge of Six Rivers National Forest, told the State of California in 1997 that it planned to discontinue use of the property

as a telecommunications site unless a forest management plan was amended to make Red Mountain a telecoms site. The Forest Service also required the State to undergo a federal environmental process which would again bring them face to face with Indian groups and tribal governments who would determine whether the site continues to be a sacred place. The State and Forest Service would also negotiate directly with the Yurok Tribal Council, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Tribal Heritage Preservation Office (THPO) which is a change from those that they dealt with in 1995. In essence, the Tribal Council along with Yurok religious leaders and practitioners would need to agree that the radio site does not adversely affect Yurok religion and cultural practices.

Currently, the State's communication structures are deteriorating and outdated. In recent months representatives from the California's Department of General Services initiated talks with the Tribe's Culture Committee, cultural resource staff and Tribal Council seeking permission to move forward on getting a new permit issued by the USFS. The goal of the project would be to consolidate all communication facilities into a single tower. The General Services representatives have stressed the importance of having Cal Fire's uses improved because of their direct firefighting activities in the area. The DGS also wants to enlarge the site and has funds to do so, but it does not want to spend the money without an extension from 2022 to 2037.

“THE FOREST SERVICE HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO FOLLOW THE LAW.”
Bob McConnell~ THPO

Yurok elders and religious users argue that the communications site should be moved to a non-culturally sensitive location. The U.S. Forest Service, the property owner, agrees that no new licenses should be granted.

“The Forest Service has a responsibility to follow the law and we're pleased that they are now protecting Yurok religious areas,” said Yurok Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer Bob McConnell.

In addition to Cal Fire, the other eleven other license holders using the radio site, which include: U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of the Interior, California State Parks, California Highway Patrol, California Department

of Transportation, California Department of Fish and Game, California Emergency Management Agency, California Department of Water Resources, Del Norte County and the Yurok Tribe. Users had

been granted over twenty five years to find alternative sites for communication needs. Many of them are waiting for the State to find a solution and follow their lead to a new site whether it is on Red Mountain or another peak within Yurok ancestral territory.

At this time there is no direct threat of losing communication services in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. However, complete coverage for all residents will remain unlikely even with the use of Red Mountain. The Tribal Council is seeking a no net loss to communications and recently asked Governor Brown to consider ways in which Yurok religion is not compromised nor the health and safety of our local community members. The Council is seeking tribal member input on this matter and will host three primary public meetings. **The first meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2012 in Weitchpec, the second meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2012 in Klamath at the main tribal office and the third meeting in the South District is scheduled for January 14, 2012.** Meetings will begin at 4 p.m., except for the South District meeting, which will begin at 2p.m.. All tribal member input will be recorded and provided to the Tribal Council. In addition to public meetings, the Yurok Tribal newspaper editor and Public Relations Manager, Matt Mais will also accept public input via email at mmais@yuroktribe.nsn.us

The Yurok Tribe will be holding educational meetings to bring the tribal membership up to date on the licensing process and will provide information about how to participate.✧



Yurok IT Department wins big award

TribalNet is pleased to announce the 2011 Tribal Technology Leadership Award Winners. Amongst this year's nominees were IT Teams who have shown substantial accomplishments in leadership, excellence, innovation and at times overcoming the odds all while utilizing technology effectively for successful business and nation building. "As we have moved into our 4th year of honoring IT teams with this award, the number of recommendations increases year to year," states Shannon Bouschor TribalNet Director. Mike Day, TribalNet Founder and Director of the Advisory Boards continues, "Our board identifies ways each year to improve how teams are recognized. In 2011 we wanted encourage tribes of all sizes to submit their application for consideration."

Award categories for 2011 were based on IT team size. In the category for nine or more, Paul Romero, IS Director of the Yurok Tribe Information Services Department accepted this year's award on behalf of his team stating, "It was amazing to be singled out amongst so many other great tribal IT teams." The Yurok Tribe Information Services Department has shown exceptional growth

and development in both information services and information technology and has successfully overcome some significant challenges. "We think we are doing a good thing and accomplishing something with the intent to make this a model for others who are dealing with similar challenges."

For the eight or less category, Robert Pollard, Director of IT for Blue Lake Rancheria accepted the award on behalf of his team. Robert and his team have made great strides in the world of both tribal governments and gaming and have shown true innovation in their IT projects and initiatives. "Being an IT department overseeing both the tribe and the gaming and enterprise side, there will no doubt be a fight when we get back for which side gets to keep the award in their office! We feel this isn't just an accomplishment of our IT team but of the efforts of our entire organization. Having this recognition directly from our peers is such an honor." stated Robert.

Both recipients extended their gratitude for being honored with this prestigious industry award. ✘

Tribal Police seize hundreds of pot plants on Rez

The Yurok Tribe's Department of Public Safety recently seized more than 370 mature marijuana plants from a clandestine grow in the Weitchpec area.

Public Safety happened across the illegal operation while investigating an unrelated crime in collaboration with the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department in the morning hours of October 24. On October 25, Public Safety Officers obtained a search warrant from the Yurok Tribal Court. On the same day, officers executed the warrant.

In addition to the budding plants, Public Safety also found several pounds of processed pot. There were several people working in the sophisticated garden, where all plants were labeled by strain. However, official charges have not yet been filed, but it is likely those involved will be cited into tribal court. A report will be forwarded to the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office, which can also file charges in Humboldt County Superior Court.

There were also environmental hazards associated with the grow, an all-too-common occurrence with large-scale outdoor marijuana production. There were piles of human feces and

butane canisters were scattered around the location. The Yurok Tribe's Environmental Program will be notified once the investigation is complete.

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office destroyed the illegal plants. This is the second sizeable unlawful commercial grow that the Yurok Tribe's Department of Public Safety has disrupted this year. The department has seized 581 plants all together. "The Tribe has a Zero Tolerance Resolution against the cultivation of marijuana and we enforce it," said Yurok Department of Public Safety Chief Mary McQuillen.

The resolution states: "It is undisputed that there is a problem with illegal drugs within the boundaries of the Yurok Reservation. The Yurok Tribal Council has a strict Zero Tolerance policy prohibiting the presence of illegal drugs within the boundaries of the Reservation. This policy includes the non-recognition of state issued 215 identification cards.

The Yurok Tribe does not recognize California's 1996 Compassionate Use Act, which allows certain state citizens to grow marijuana for medical purposes. ✘

Q and A with Rhonda Wright, the Yurok Tribe's Legal Secretary and Employee of the Month.



What is your title? Legal Secretary for the Legal Department (OTA).

How long have you been working for the Tribe? I have been working here since January 2011, although I had worked here before.

Why did you decide to work for the Tribe? I knew that no matter the Job or Department that I would have been hired into, I would be able to contribute to the greater good of our people by providing quality service both personally and professionally.

What does your job entail? As a Legal Secretary I perform a variety of administrative tasks and scheduling, including assistance to the Probate Specialist.

What is the most satisfying part of your job? Being here. I am satisfied with being an asset to the tribe as well as have the opportunity to provide quality service for Council and all departments.

How does your position serve the tribal membership? As Legal Secretary I am able to provide an indirect service to the tribal membership. The Office of the Tribal Attorney provides support and acts as legal counsel to the Yurok Tribal Council.

What do you do outside of work? I enjoy a variety of things ranging from sewing projects to restoring my 1965 Barracuda. My current goals are to learn how to play the guitar and go through Search and Rescue training with my Labrador.

What are your plans for the future? I plan on staying here at the Tribe. I feel that I have reached my career goal for the moment. Here I can gain more experience in both personal and professional growth while pursuing my interests mentioned at question #7. ✨

Rhonda's nomination

Each month the Yurok Tribe's directors and managers submit a written nominations singling out exceptional workers. After reading all of the nominations the group votes and the employee with the most votes wins. Yurok Tribal Member Rhonda Wright is the most current recipient of the "Employee of the Month" honors. The Legal Secretary answered a number of questions for *Yurok Today* about her contribution to the Yurok Tribe. (Left)

Reason for Nomination:

In the short time that Rhonda has worked for the Office of the Tribal Attorney, she has proven to be an essential reason that this office is improving in its efforts to serve the Tribal Council and the Departments of the Yurok Tribe. She is extremely personable with an upbeat and can-do attitude, she is highly organized, and she is constantly going above and beyond the mere requirements of her position.

Within just a few weeks of hire, another department supervisor commented to this office that she could see a major difference in both the accessibility and the efficiency of the Office of the Tribal Attorney due to Rhonda's presence. Since that time, Rhonda has worked tirelessly to coordinate with other departments, to place essential documents on the Tribe's network in electronic form, to re-configure the layout of the office to accommodate an additional employee work station, and to support the attorneys and paralegals by providing them with the essential background information for their projects even though she is as new or newer to this material as the other professionals. In addition, she is beginning classes to increase her knowledge, education and qualifications in the legal secretarial and paralegal fields.

It has been a great pleasure working with Rhonda. At this point in time, we do not know what we would do without her. ✨



Yurok Tribe

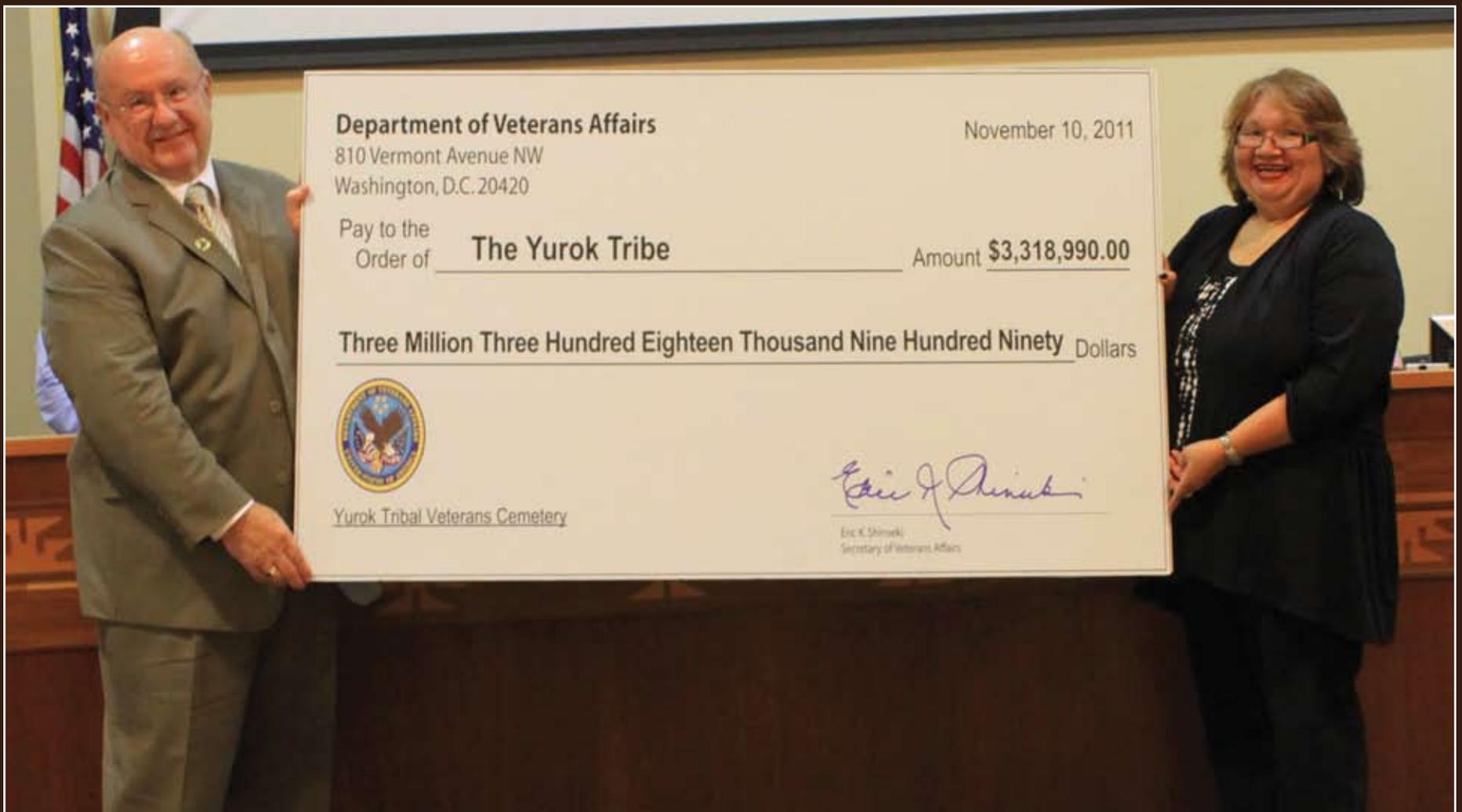
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Frank Salvas, Director of the State Cemetery Grant Services, and Yurok Vice Chairwoman Marjorie Buckskin hold a \$3.3 million check that will be used to build a cemetery for Native American Veterans and their families.