



Yurok Today

THE VOICE OF THE YUOK PEOPLE

Meet the Executive Director

Yurok Today: Dennis, you recently assumed the position of Executive Director of the Yurok Tribe. Our interview today can be a good way of introducing you to those members of the tribe who haven't had the chance to meet you personally yet.

Let's start by talking about your Yurok identity. What does it mean to you to be a Yurok?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: I grew up in the woods of Northern Wisconsin during some tumultuous times there, when local tribes were exerting their rights to spearfish. I started thinking about my own identity and what it means for me to be a Yurok at that time.



Executive Director,
Dennis Puz, Jr.



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Growing up in the Midwest, I wasn't able to participate in Yurok tribal culture the way I would like my son to participate. I came home to work for the tribe and to make myself whole again. I belong to this area. I have roots in this area from the beginning of time.

Yurok Today: Can you tell us more about your personal background?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: My father, Dennis Puz, Sr., grew up in the area. My

See *DIRECTOR*, page 12

TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN NEARS COMPLETION

From kamikaze corners to collapsing roadbeds, just about every Yurok tribal member has a story to tell about the challenges of getting from here to there. Many depend on a fragile and crumbling road system for everything from grocery shopping to ambulance service.

What can be done to improve the transportation network?

Community Outreach Coordinator Neil Peacock took this question

to the tribal membership at community meetings in Klamath and Weitchpec in late February. Peacock describes his role as "structuring a process" for transportation improvements. "We have been actively involving Yurok tribal members and community residents. We have been listening to their priorities, identifying their needs, and developing realistic, long-range strategies," he says.

See *TRANSPORTATION*, page 7

Desmond ('Merkie') Oliver on Eeling

If you're lucky enough to visit Tribal Elder Desmond ("Merkie") Oliver at his cozy Requa home, you'll be offered a warm chair by the fire, great river views, and the stories and wisdom of a lifetime. On the afternoon that *Yurok Today* came to call, we talked about—what else?—eels.

Born in 1929, Merkie has been catching eels since the age of 5—that's over seventy years of eeling experience. Eels have been a traditional wintertime food source for the Yurok people since the beginning of time, and they can be eaten both fresh and smoked.



Tribal Elder shows hand-carved yew-wood eel hook

The eeling season usually begins in September and ends in April. "They're known as the vampires"

See *MERKIE*, page 14

FLOOD 2005-6 RECAP PHOTOS PAGE 16



Chairman's Message

Bringing Out the Best in Us

by Howard McConnell



The storms started rolling in off the Pacific Ocean like clockwork. Between the 26th and 28th of December, YTEP's gauging station at Tully Creek recorded nearly 7 inches of rain. After midnight on the 29th, the Klamath River surged to over 40 feet. But the worst was yet to come. More heavy rain on the 30th and 31st raised the river at Blake's Riffle to an incredible 47.12 feet—one of the highest levels ever recorded.

Yurok tribal employees and members responded with a series of quick and often courageous actions. Yurok Public Safety officers evacuated those who needed assistance, in one case using a rowboat to rescue two tribal members—and 27 dogs—from the raging floodwaters. YPS set up a command post that became both a refuge and a clearing house for information.

Yurok Social Services relocated 39 tribal members, providing them

with motel rooms and food vouchers. YSS assisted an additional 320 people—including members of other tribes and non-Indians—with scores of lesser needs including minor first aid, emergency food, and transportation.

Upriver was especially hit hard by the series of storms. Mudslides closed many of the roads, making it extra tough for relief crews to reach isolated areas and restore vital services. Almost overnight, the tribal office at Weitchpec became a beehive of activity. At the height of the crisis, its parking areas were filled to capacity with trucks from many different departments and agencies. Inside, squads of workers stacked case after case of bottled water, distributing it to all in need.

Restoring the community water systems was a top priority. Some tribal employees climbed into streams, standing waist-deep in icy water to dislodge rocks and sediment that were clogging up culverts. By the end of the first week, all four community water systems were back on-line.

The story still isn't over yet. Road

repairs are still going on in some areas, and we continue to add up the damages to our infrastructure. Right now we're working on enhancing our emergency preparedness, so we can do even better next time.

It's time to recognize all the unsung heroes of Flood 2005-2006. The list is large—but so were the contributions. Special thanks go to the Yurok Tribe's Planning, Land Management, Legal, Human Resources, Fiscal, Social Services, Forestry, Environment, Fisheries, Public Safety, Public Utilities, Watershed and Administration Departments. The Yurok Volunteer Fire Department and Search & Rescue also really came through.

The Karuk Tribe's staff

delivered potable water and worked tirelessly to get it to the people.

Indian Health Services made emergency water deliveries and emergency water system repairs. United Indian Health Services provided emergency medical supplies, with Bea Nix and Minnie Robbins as standout performers.

Also worthy of special mention:

American Red Cross
California Department of Transportation
California Highway Patrol
CalTrans
Del Norte County Department of Health & Social Services
Del Norte County Office of Emergency Services
Del Norte County Roads and Engineering
Del Norte County Sheriff's Department
Humboldt County Public Works
Humboldt County Sheriff's Department—thanks, Officer Cavinta!
KCRE, KPOD and KIDE radio stations
Kennec Earth Engineering
Klamath Fire Protection District
Klamath Volunteer Fire Department
Pem-Mey Fuel Mart
Trinity Valley Consulting Engineers

To all the others who helped, thanks! Your efforts made it possible for the Yurok Tribe to come out of this major storm event without the loss of a single life.





Fine Tribal Arts Collection Repatriated

Long Struggle Rewarded

At an emotional event at the Potowac Health Center in Arcata on January 6, Jennifer Still, a Yurok tribal member, took possession of a priceless collection of Indian ceremonial cultural items that had belonged to her grandmother, Dorothy Lee Still.

"I'm excited, happy and relieved, all at the same time," said Jennifer, voicing the sentiments of many of those who joined her to individually bless the cultural items over a ceremonial fire. The collection had languished for three years in a locker at the Humboldt County Coroner's office.

"I'm glad we made it to this day," Buffy McQuillen, the tribe's NAG-PRA coordinator, told the group. Yet the happy day almost didn't happen at all. Left to Jennifer by her grandmother, the unique assortment of baskets and dance items had been in imminent danger of being sold at auction to pay off creditors' claims against the estate.



The collection is "irreplaceable," said Samuel D. Hough, a Directing Attorney for California Indian Legal Services (CILS). He added that the loss and breakup of the collection in order to pay the debts of the Dorothy Lee Still estate "could not be allowed to happen."

"Great thing! We prevailed," said Tribal Councilman Richard Myers. "This protected the collection from being sold at auction." The Yurok Tribe worked extensively with Jennifer and CILS to win the collection's release. The Cabazon Band of Mission Indians made a helpful donation to the estate and, after learning of the unique cultural importance of the objects, some creditors agreed to write off part of the debt.

Collection highlights include deer horn necklaces with deer hooves, cooking baskets used for acorn soup, and baby baskets. There are two deerskin dresses ornately decorated with abalone shells, beargrass and pine nuts, and an Indian stick game



See TRIBAL ARTS page 10

EARLY COLLEGE OF THE REDWOODS: NEWS

By Founding Director Geneva Wiki



Students of Early College of the Redwoods

If you've been to the Klamath townsite lately, you may have noticed there is a new energy stirring about behind the Klamath Market. You may hear the sound of wood carving, as a new canoe is emerging from an old redwood log, or you may see a group of teenagers pile out of a Tribal truck, carrying their waders, fresh off the River and learning alongside Tribal biologists. Listen closely and you may hear Yurok vocabulary words from the Yurok language class or even a Yurok song being sung.

The Klamath River Early College of the Redwoods opened on September 19, 2005, with the goal to increase high school graduation and college completion rates among Yurok and other youth in

the reservation area. The public charter high school is a partnership of the Yurok Tribe, College of the Redwoods-Del Norte and is chartered by the Del Norte County Board of Education.

What makes this school special is its creation story. Community members, Tribal leaders, educators and parents began a conversation about how to improve the educational odds for our young people. We know that too many Native kids still do not graduate from high school or complete college. Over a series of meetings, the community asked itself: What do we want our young people to know and be able to do? What changes do we need to make to the system so our

See COLLEGE, page 10



Photo Arnold Nova

Klamath Hydroelectric Project Relicensing

By Fisheries Manager Dave Hillemeier

Relicensing of the Klamath River dams continues, as does the Tribe's resolve to strive for removal of the four primary mainstem dams; a goal that would return salmon to the Upper Basin as well as improve water quality downstream of the hydroelectric project. The Tribe is actively participating in two independent, but related, processes regarding the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process; the traditional and settlement processes. The traditional process has been ongoing for the past five years, and will ultimately result in the issuance of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) by FERC regarding the conditions of a potential future license, which would likely last for 30 – 50 years. The other process

involves settlement discussions/negotiations amongst the governments, agencies, and stakeholders that are most affected by the fate of the dams.

Both of these processes are at critical junctures. Within the traditional process, February 27, 2006 is the deadline for Federal agencies to issue prescriptions regarding fish passage and operational criteria for any future project operations. While these prescriptions cannot require dam removal, they may require conditions necessary for successful reintroduction of anadromous fish to the Upper Basin. Such conditions may be so expensive that relicensing would not be economically feasible to PacifiCorps, the owner

AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS—WHY NOT?

By Jim McQuillen, PPS, MFCT

I recently came home from work in the evening to find my two high school students working on their homework "making cut out pictures for their Spanish class". I jokingly gave them the broken Spanish that I know and tossed in a few Yurok words to keep it fun. The kids seemed to be lost when I gave them the Yurok words for bread (pop-sew) and water (paa-a). This got me thinking, of course.

I was disturbed by the fact that my tax dollars can teach my children Spanish, German, and even French at Del Norte High School but not my own native language, no Yurok, no Tolowa language classes.

American Indians represent about 15% of the student population in Del Norte Schools. We should demand that classes be offered in Yurok and Tolowa again. We did have Tolowa just a few years ago at Del Norte High School. It was accepted in meeting the A-G world language requirement for California State University and University of California. It can happen again.

We also need to recognize Native language classes and Native American sensitive curriculum as dropout prevention. This is especially important considering the fact that American Indian students continue to have the highest dropout rate for all ethnic groups in the nation. The language classes or curriculum give American Indian students some familiar symbols and culture that connect the students' home life with the school environment. Public schools really are supposed to reflect the communities that they serve. Why can't the curriculum

of the dams; hence dam removal would be the likely alternative. The Settlement Process involves confidential negotiations which cannot be disclosed, however the fact that the various entities from throughout the basin are meeting to discuss such important issues is a positive sign.

The Fisheries Program will keep Tribal members informed as this process proceeds. There will be times that Tribal member input to the process will be essential, such as commenting on the draft EIS when it is distributed and potential rallies that may occur in the future.





Community Meetings Held on the Tribal Park Concept

Following a 2005 decision by the Yurok Tribal Council to establish a tribal park system, planning has advanced to the community input phase. At a series of public working sessions held on and off the reservation, Dr. Thomas Gates, Director of Self Governance, has been listening carefully to what tribal members have to say about

proximately 12,000 acres lie in the lower Blue Creek watershed. Blue Creek is a major tributary of the Klamath River and an important spawning habitat for Chinook, Coho and Steelhead species.

Supporters of the plan describe the park as a giant step forward in regaining ancestral lands that

management agencies...into practice through jointly undertaken management decisions and joint implementation actions," according to the concept plan. Partners would include the Redwood National and State Parks, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.



ism on sacred sites, particularly in the Blue Creek area. They also wonder about any conditions that may be placed on tribal hunting and fishing rights.

Gates says that tribal members will have better access to the natural resources of the area under the plan than they currently enjoy—including the potential resumption of a subsistence hunting and gathering program. Access to the newly opened areas will be provided in a "controlled and managed fashion," he says, and it not will involve inappropriate public prying into the lives of the Yurok people or commercial attempts to "sell" Yurok culture.



Dr. Thomas Gates listening to tribal members' input on the Tribal Park

the bold—and sometimes controversial—plan.

Dr. Gates describes the park plan as "the cornerstone for bringing more than 50,000 additional acres to the tribe and generating \$30-50 million for land purchase." At the heart of the concept is the use of money to be donated by conservation groups for the acquisition of 47,100 acres of land from Green Diamond Resources Company (formerly Simpson Timber). Ap-

have been taken from the tribe over the past two centuries. Re-establishing this ancestral land base will not be easy, they say, but by bringing together donors, willing land sellers, and state and federal agencies, it can be done. Some of the land that would comprise the tribal park is unavailable for outright purchase, so a series of collaborative management agreements would safeguard tribal interests while "putting the values that are shared by all of the land

Gates envisions the tribal park as playing a key role in the tribe's future economic development. He estimates that as many as 30 full-time jobs would be created, along with substantial secondary economic benefits to be enjoyed throughout the area. Neither Redwood National nor State Parks offer overnight lodging, so an eco-lodge is one possibility. Other developments would include campgrounds, river docks, and interpretative backcountry and ocean guide services. Bald Hills Road is proposed as a National Scenic Byway.

Not all tribal members are equally enthusiastic about the program, however. At community meetings, some have openly questioned whether the plan, with its collaborative management agreements, will really expand tribal sovereignty. Some argue that they should have been consulted earlier in the process, while others have expressed concern over what they see as the potentially adverse impact of tour-



ATTENTION ALL TRIBAL MEMBERS OR ELIGIBLE FISHERS

Net Auction date is scheduled for Saturday, March 19, 2006 12:00 - 4:00
At Yurok Department of Public Safety Office
247 Salmon Ave.
Klamath, CA 95548
Call 707-482-8185 for questions



2006 Spring Fishery Planning Meetings

By Fisheries Manager David Hillemeier

Meetings to discuss the structure of the 2006 spring fishery will be held with Tribal Fishers at the dates and times listed below. Regulations were adopted last year to protect green sturgeon and spring Chinook populations; these included a two-day per week closure, allocations of green sturgeon per person and per area, prohibition of selling and bartering green sturgeon, and use of a green sturgeon punch card. Input will be received from Tribal Fishers re-

garding last year's regulations, as well as recommendations for the coming spring fishery.

Also planned for discussion is the status of Klamath Basin wild spring Chinook populations. Last year resulted in the lowest return on record for spring Chinook of the Salmon River, as well as one of the lowest returns for the South Fork Trinity River (see figure below). As we work toward the Tribe's goal of restoring spring Chinook

to the Upper Klamath Basin, the importance of restoring Salmon River spring Chinook becomes amplified, as it is a primary source of broodstock for the reintroduction effort to the Upper Basin.

Photo Arnold Nova

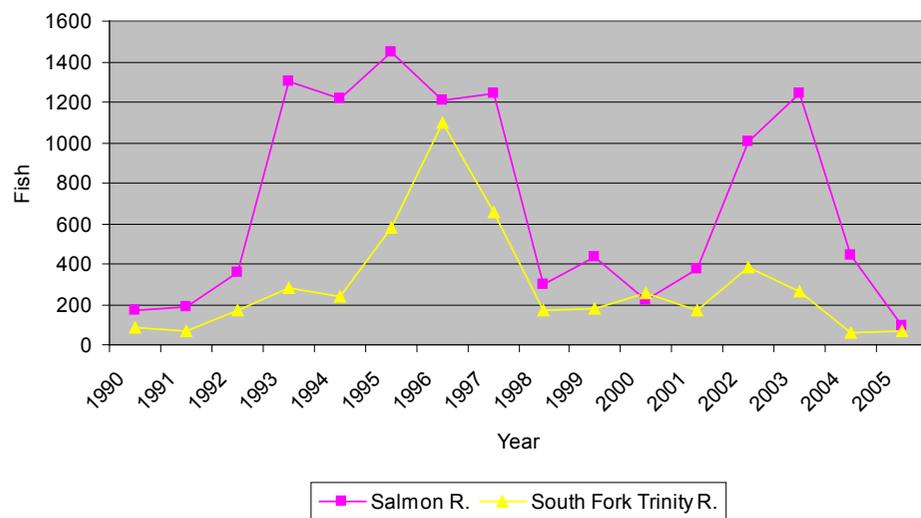


ATTENTION YUROK TRIBE FISHERIES INFORMATION MEETINGS

- SATURDAY, MARCH 11TH, 2006
- CRESCENT CITY 10:00 AM ELK VALLEY RANCHERIA COMMUNITY ROOM, Norris Avenue
- KLAMATH 1:00 PM YUROK TRIBAL OFFICE
- EUREKA 4:30 PM Cutten Tribal Office
- SUNDAY, MARCH 12TH, 2006
- WAUTEC 10:00 AM FIRE STATION
- WEITCHPEC 1:00 PM WEITCHPEC TRIBAL OFFICE

AGENDA
2006 Fisheries Management

Salmon and South Fork Trinity River Spring Chinook



Important Dates to Keep in Mind!

August 5
Yurok Tribal Membership Annual Meeting

August 20
Salmon Festival

PUBLIC HEARINGS NOTICES

1. YUROK TRIBE COPYRIGHT PROTECTION ACT

March 3, 2006 10 a.m.

At the MAIN TRIBAL OFFICE, KLAMATH, CA

2. YUROK FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

March 3, 2006 3 p.m.

At the WEITCHPEC TRIBAL OFFICE, WEITCHPEC, CA

Comments on these ordinances may be emailed to rbohrer@yuroktribe.nsn.us or written comments sent to Robert Bohrer, Law Clerk, Office of the Tribal Attorney, Yurok Tribe, 190 Klamath Blvd., P.O. Box 1027, Klamath, CA 95548. Written comments will be accepted until 5 p.m. on March 3, 2006.



Employee of the Month



DECEMBER 2005

JANUARY 2006

Rita Wafler

Social Worker

Rita Wafler has been a social worker in the tribe's Social Services Department since May 2005.

A Yurok tribal member, Rita was born and raised in Klamath. She has a B.A. from Humboldt State University, an M.A. from Sonoma State and a Ph.D from Sierra University. She's married, has two sons (ages 10 and 12), and lives in Crescent City.



Rita is a Licensed Marriage Family Therapist (LMFT) who provides family assistance and mental health counseling for Native Americans. She also aids tribal members in emergencies. Recently she was busy helping families dislocated in the flood in ways that ranged from finding them temporary housing to assisting them with their special medical requirements.

"I get a lot of joy helping people with real needs," says Rita.

Charlene Labrasca

Payroll Bookkeeper

Charlene Labrasca is the Payroll Bookkeeper in the tribe's Fiscal Department. She's worked at Klamath since June 2004. Chalene does the payroll for tribal employees, and is responsible for paying Federal and State payroll taxes. She's the mother of three—two boys and one girl—and lives in Crescent City.

"I was shocked to get the Employee of the Month award," says Charlene. "I love my work, and it keeps me very busy." Her biggest challenge? "Having enough time to do everything!"



TRANSPORTATION

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At the meetings, tribal members spoke freely about difficulties they face in getting around on a daily basis. A number of them said that they wanted to be more involved in the tribe's cultural and social activities, pointing to the need for improved transportation to make this possible. Topping the list of transportation priorities was repair and construction work to State Highway 169 and to Bald Hills Rd. Subject to intermittent delays and closures, these two roads are the only link to the world beyond for many upriver residents.

Following a twisting and circuitous course for twenty miles from

Weitchpec to Wautec, Route 169 is California's only one-lane (and two-way!) highway. Tribal members noted the need for comprehensive safety improvements on this road, with some saying that full-scale reconstruction is needed as well as repair.

Connecting Klamath to upriver areas, Bald Hills Rd is also badly in need of attention. The tribal transportation priorities program calls for the reconstruction, widening and paving of this road, with the first phase to fix 4.6 miles on the reservation and the second phase to attend to the 15 miles from the boundary of the reservation to the end of the pavement.

Third on the tribal transporta-

tion priority list is a public transit system to serve upriver communities. Proposals made at the community meetings included a bus

system to be linked with existing fixed-route transit services, and a river ferry. A replacement of Martin's Ferry Bridge, which has a cracked abutment, comes in fourth on the list of priorities.

With the public outreach phase now nearly complete, tribal planners and transportation experts will be coming together over the next few months to develop a full-blown transportation operations plan that incorporates tribal member input while working out thorny engineering and feasibility issues. Stage three calls for funding—and implementation—of the tribe's long-range transportation plan.



Tony O'Rourke in front of his washed-out driveway off Hwy 169

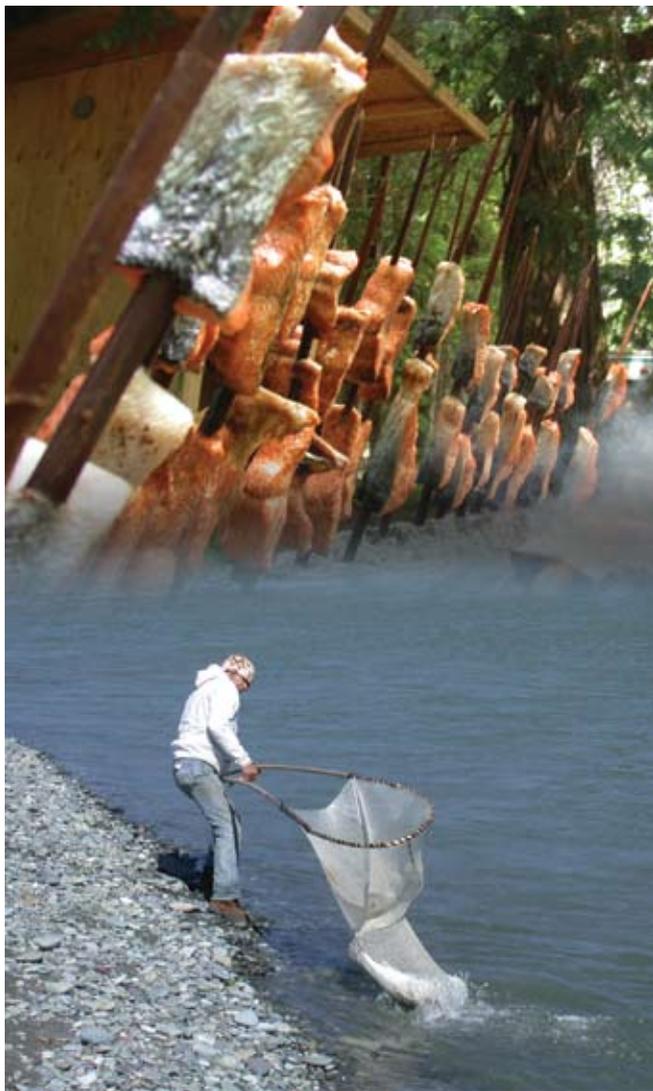




FOOD FOR ELDER'S PROGRAM TEACHES THE YUROK WAY

By Social Services Staff Members Felice Pace and Yadao Inong

Back in the old days before the coming of the Europeans the natural cycle of life flowed like the Klamath River from Upriver Ocean to Downriver Ocean, from upslope to downslope. In the Yurok Way the adults took care of the children and the younger folks took care of the elders.



*Top, salmon on sticks; Bottom, traditional dip-netting
Photos Arnold Nova*

That tradition is still followed today. Those who are able to fish distribute fish to those who are too

old to fish for themselves; those who gather acorns make acorn meal for those who are too old to gather acorns.

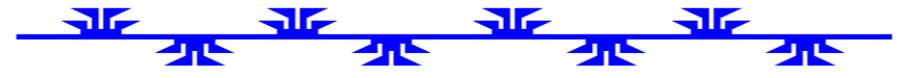
Unfortunately, the coming of the Europeans brought many negative changes. Many died and many who survived were forced to move away. Some children stopped fishing, stopped gathering and caring for their elders, and some families lost the traditional ways.

One of the missions of Yurok Social Services is to teach young people the history, traditions and values of the Yurok People. Through the Food for Elders program we involve Yurok youth in fishing and processing fish, gathering acorns and processing the acorns. Then

we go with the young people to distribute the food to elders living in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

Just before Christmas, Yurok Youth distributed 105 jars of kippered salmon and 64 bags of acorn meal to 105 elders. That is not a lot of food but it was the thought that counted most – many of the elders were thrilled with the visit and touched that the young people were thinking of them. This month we are contacting every elder in both counties to find out if they want to participate in the future. We hope to expand beyond fish and acorns to seaweed, mussels, berries and other traditional foods.

Modern American society calls what the young Yuroks did “service learning.” Research has demonstrated that involving young people in service to their communities builds character and helps young people resist drugs and other problem behavior. So we see that modern society has discovered what Yuroks of old knew and practiced as part of everyday life. Taking care of your elders is the Yurok Way – the way we continue to live with our young people here at Yurok Social Services.



Ceremony marks United Indian Health Services transfer of three baskets to the Yurok Tribe





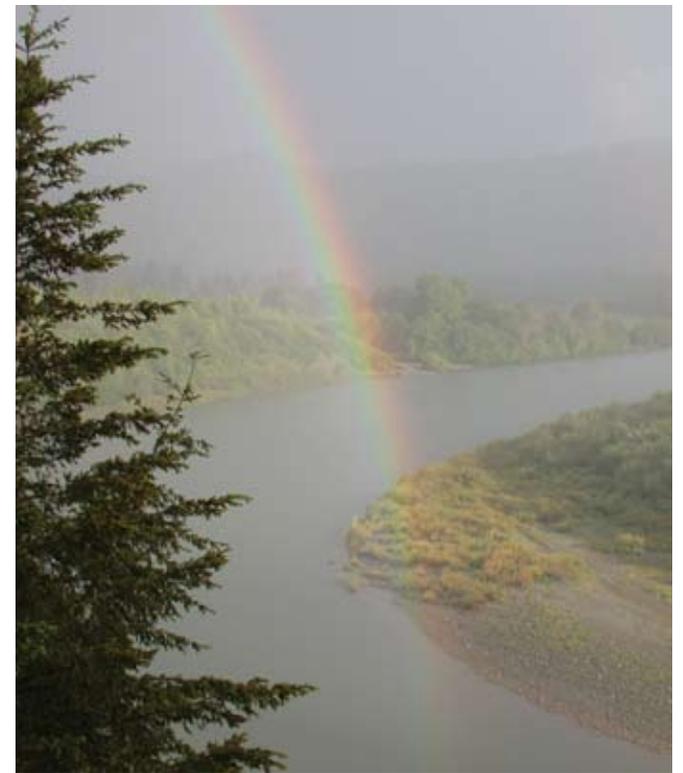
COUNCIL CALENDAR

March 2006

Council Planning Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. March 8
Hazard Mitigation Community Meeting	Weitchpec Tribal Office	5 p.m. March 8
Council Action Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. March 9
YIHA Meeting	Weitchpec Tribal Office (East, Pecwan and Weitchpec Districts)	1 p.m. March 11
South District Meeting	Fisheries Meeting Eureka Tribal Office	4:30 p.m. March 11
Requa District Meeting	Conference Room Klamath	5 p.m. March 14
Council Planning Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. March 22
Council Action Meeting	Weitchpec Tribal Office	10 a.m. March 23
Council Finance Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. March 24

April 2006

Council Planning Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. April 5
Council Action Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. April 6
Requa District Meeting	Conference Room/Klamath	5 p.m. April 11
North District Meeting		2-4 p.m. April 15
Easter Sunday		April 16
Council Planning Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. April 19
Council Action Meeting	Weitchpec Tribal Office	10 a.m. April 20
Council Finance Meeting	Council Chambers Klamath	10 a.m. April 21



Yurok Indian Housing Authority News

PO Box 98, Klamath, CA 95548 707-482-1506 or 800-281-4749
www.yurokhousing.com email - yiha@yurokhousing.com

This is our 11th year in existence. While most of the staff has not been here since the beginning we are nevertheless focused on carrying out the mission adopted eleven years ago. "The Primary Mission of the Yurok Indian Housing Authority shall be to provide affordable, safe and decent housing to lower-income tribal members..." Over the last year we have sat down with the various departments of the tribe discussing how we could better serve the needs of the Yurok Tribal members and as a result our 2005 Indian Housing Plan and the upcoming 2006 Indian Housing Plan is a reflection of those discussions.

The 2005 Indian Housing Plan incorporated a new program titled Rental Assistance. Within the next three months we will be implementing the rental assistance program. It is very similar to the Section 8 program. The program will be offered to low income families that are working or going to school part time. Preference will be given to families whose rent currently exceeds 30% of their Adjusted Income. The Policies have not been approved by the Board of Commissioners but you should send in your application if you think that you may qualify for this program.

The 2006 Indian Housing plan will incorporate 4 Self Help Projects. Each applicant may be awarded up to a \$45,000 loan for Non-Elders and a \$45,000 grant for Elders. You must have documentation demonstrating that you own the land and dwelling and can carry out the project.

Please be aware that we are not slated to approve any Rehabilitation or Replacement projects during the next two cycles. The Land & Development Department has over 10 left over projects from previous years and we hope to have those completed within the next year. Our focus is to build up our Rental units and Homeownership units. A portion of the money we receive is based on the number of Rental and Mutual Help units we have. We will need to obtain financing for future development on the Bennett Property located in Klamath and the Judson Brown & Boring Property located upriver.

Meetings are normally held the first Tuesday of every month. The Board of Commissioners includes Chairperson Maxine Lewis-Raymond, East District; Treasurer EW Pearson, Weitchpec District; Secretary Susie Long, Orick District; Maria Tripp, South District; Lavina Bowers, Requa District; George Robbins III, Pecwan District, and Council Liaison Lyle McKinnon; North District is vacant.



COLLEGE

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young people can reach their potential? The community's answers matched the latest research about good teaching and learning. Curriculum needs to be relevant to students' lives. Students need to develop strong reading, writing and math skills, Native language and culture must be reflected in the classroom, and the learning must be personalized to meet each student's individual needs.

The result is a new high school offering students the chance to earn up to two years of college credit with their high school di-



ploma-tuition free. All students are co-enrolled at College of the Redwoods and have taken the college entrance exams. Each student has an individualized learning plan and students are able to advance through each subject area at their own academic pace. Reading, writing, math, science and social studies are taught everyday, and students are also required to demonstrate skills in the areas of Personal/Social/Health, cultural

awareness, career development, service learning and technology. Students attend Yurok language class twice a week.

"This school is fun. It isn't like most schools where you just sit in lectures and listen to teachers. At this school we get to participate in real projects, which is really cool. It is also different because the teachers make sure you are actually learning. We have a lot of one-on-one time, which is good," said student Katie Rolon.

Using a nationally recognized and award-winning model, regular class structure has been replaced by a standards-based program. This model allows greater flexibility for dynamic learning opportunities. For example, students met state science standards by studying the Klamath watershed. Students choose a fish species of the basin and presented their research in an oral and written report. To prepare, students went to Humboldt State University's fish laboratory and spawned fish, traveled to Mill Creek to watch salmon spawn, met with Watershed Department staff, tagged eels with Tribal fisheries department, hatched salmon eggs in a classroom hatchery and hosted a guest speaker from the US Department of Fish and Wildlife. Parents and community members served as panelists to evaluate students' oral presentations. In

another project, students prepared for the California High School Exit Exam by studying a Yurok Village of their choice. They interviewed community members; hiked the coastal trail; visited Sumeg village with Tribal elder Glenn Moore Sr.;



met with a Tribal cultural resource manager, Bob McConnell; visited the Tribe's archive to watch oral history videos; conducted research at the College of the Redwoods and HSU libraries; read from a variety books about the Yurok and visited the villages on both sides of the mouth of the River. Students completed written reports and a few even built mini village replicas.

So if you are in or around the townsite, drop by and say hello. If you know of anyone who would be interested in enrolling, applications are now being accepted for the 2006-2007 academic year. With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the State of California, the school is tuition-free (including college credits) and open to students of all ethnic backgrounds who have completed 8th grade and are younger than 18 years old.

TRIBAL ARTS

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set, along with a traditional drum. Although it is difficult to estimate the age of some of the objects, a number are believed to date to the period from 1890s to 1950s.



LANGUAGE

continued from page 4

and some of the course selection reflect local tribes?

Currently much of the public school curriculum is rich in European-Anglo culture. This includes the history, government classes, and classic authors that are cherished by the public school curriculum. As this important curriculum is taught, local tribal history, tribal government sovereignty lessons, and the great cultural stories, myths and legends get put to the side. It's up to us to find avenues to get our history and cultural into the curriculum and classroom. We can attend school site council meetings, board meetings and talk to the classroom teachers requesting that the curriculum be used and the course offerings be included and provided by the school distinct. If public schools can provide instruction in German, French and Spanish, why not Yurok and Tolowa classes also?



Photos this page Arnold Nova





The Yurok Tribe is Growing!

New tribal members for 2006:

- Robert Alexander Earl Blake
- Shekky Gorbet Bowen, Jr.
- Dominic Tyler Daniels
- Trentin James Fillmore-Mendez
- Gavyn Christopher Gaskell
- Angel Nicole Goodman
- Keanu Zimri Harmon
- Makeala Janaya Jordan
- Seth Wyatt Kinney
- Larry Samuel David Maloney
- Cha-nuueks Joni Manuel
- Matthew Lynn Montgomery
- Daisha Elizabeth Marrie Smith
- Delmagene Elvira Smith
- Dominick Eugene Smith
- Dustin Everett Smith
- Lynelle Kay Sutherland
- Ni-tai-ya Eva Debra Bessie Ann Willison
- Joshua Randolph Zastrow

Blood Degree Corrections

Jessica O'Neill

Denied Applicants

- Joshua Bartow
- Kylie Cota
- Vicki Rutstein
- Scott Schwab
- Tara Schwab
- Renah Stevenson
- Brantley Thompson

Employee of the Year



Executive Director Dennis Puz Jr. presents Public Safety Officer Thorin McCovey with Certificate of Recognition at the annual staff meeting in Klamath on January 23, 2006.

The 8th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival Starts March 30!

The Yurok way of life and the tribe's deep connection to the Klamath River is the subject of a special program offered at the 8th Annual Aleutian Goose Festival. "The Klamath River—A Yurok Way of Life" will be hosted by Yurok Tribe Environmental Program Director Kevin McKernan on March 31.

"The event gives the tribe a chance to tell its story to a diverse audience," McKernan told *Yurok Today*. "The session is limited to only 15 participants, so it provides us the

opportunity to relate to people on a one-on-one basis."

Session participants will be given an overview of Yurok culture and history, along with a survey of current water management practices and their effect on fish populations. The day-long program continues with a beautiful boat ride up the Klamath River and lunch. The cost is \$50. Participants are advised to bring waterproof boots and jackets.

The festival, long a favorite with

Turning Point Support Group Comes to Klamath

Turning Point, a support group that assists addicted teens, will be offering weekly workshops at the Klamath Community Center at 7 p.m. Wednesdays during March and April. Fred Lamberson, a Yurok tribal member and Director of the Teen Challenge Redwood Men's Center in McKinleyville, is involved with the program.

According to group sources, teens going through the program have an 86% recovery rate—far higher than traditional methods. The support group also deals with more than just drug addiction—it can help teens with other problems as well.

Call Mary Ann at 482-3409 for more details.

birders, coincides with the spring return of thousands of Aleutian Canadian Geese. The Yurok presentation is a highlight of a busy schedule of some 80 birding and nature events, workshops and guided heritage excursions, according to event organizers. It draws visitors from all over the world.

All trips depart from the Crescent City Cultural Center at 1001 Front Street. Visit the festival website at www.aleutiangoosefestival.org for more details.



DIRECTOR

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grandparents are Frank and Eleanor Grant. Frank is not my biological grandfather—my biological grandfather was Stanley Puz. But Frank is the only grandfather I've known in my life. My great-grandmother was Lena (Jones) Jackson, sister to Sam Jones from Weitchpec. On the Grant side, there's Frank Grant III, Laura Lee George and Zane Grant. My wife is Laurie Slaght Puz, and my son is Marek Aidan Puz. Marek was born in June 2005.

Before deciding to go back to school and get a law degree, I was a teacher of Social Studies for four years. I got my law degree from the University of Minnesota, which has a very good Indian law program. I came to the tribe after working in private practice representing tribal governments.

Yurok Today: What are your responsibilities as executive director?

"I CAME HOME TO WORK FOR THE TRIBE AND TO MAKE MYSELF WHOLE AGAIN. I BELONG TO THIS AREA. I HAVE ROOTS IN THIS AREA FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME."

Dennis Puz, Jr.: Everything! (Laughs.) I have two kinds of responsibilities, internal and external. In the external part, I'm charged with moving our tribal council's big projects forward. These include our gaming initiative, our fish and water issues, the

Hoopa Yurok Settlement Act, and the tribal park.

I also have internal responsibilities. I oversee all of our departments and set the tone for tribal government staff. Council sets the policies, and I work with our department directors and figure out



Executive Director Dennis Puz, Jr. shares a moment with Chairman Howard McConnell

what's the best way to make those policies reality.

Yurok Today: What's your top goal in your first year as the tribe's executive director?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: Streamlining our policies and procedures to get more done for our government and membership. I want membership and council to see that progress is being made. I want tangible results.

Yurok Today: The reservation is geo-

graphically spread out, and travel between the districts isn't always easy. What transportation problems do Yurok people face, and what solutions can be offered?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: Due to the remote location of our reservation, we do have transportation issues.

We also have funding issues. One of the things that we're hoping to do is have a river taxi system, using the Klamath River as our own highway as we have done since the beginning of time. If we can use a taxi system to get people up and down the river, that could be a viable economic tool and another avenue of transportation. With input from community members, we are now developing a new tribal transportation plan.

Yurok Today: Timber and fishing have provided jobs for tribal mem-

bers, but for a variety of reasons a number of these jobs have been lost in recent years. What is the tribe doing to attract good-paying jobs to the area?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: Economic development is something that people are interested in, but it's difficult to produce. I have talked to tribal elders who tell me that jobs in timber and fishing used to be plentiful. But our national and global economies have changed over the years, and the harvesting of natural resources isn't as lucrative as it used to be.

I think this same beautiful landscape that produced many jobs and so much income in the harvesting of the natural resources can still be our economic driver. We just need to change our focus from harvesting to doing more eco-based economic development. I would like to see our tribal park come to fruition in a form that is acceptable to our tribal membership, have an eco-lodge somewhere along our reservation, and a cultural center.

Yurok Today: What some are calling "The Great Flood of 2005-6" brought a deluge of rain along with power outages, road closures, and challenges for just about every tribal member. What did we do right, and what lessons can be learned for the future?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: What we did right is our hardworking staff coordinated with outside agencies. While we are a sovereign entity,



we don't have all the resources that we need to provide all of the services that residents of the reservation need when disaster strikes.

"I THINK THIS SAME BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE THAT PRODUCED MANY JOBS AND SO MUCH INCOME IN THE HARVESTING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES CAN STILL BE OUR ECONOMIC DRIVER. WE JUST NEED TO CHANGE OUR FOCUS FROM HARVESTING TO DOING MORE ECO-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT."

I want to give a lot of credit to our staff. They are very hard working, and they jumped in right away to assess needs and get services to the people.

What we've learned from the flood is the need to have inter-agency agreements between the tribe and the counties cemented ahead of time, so that it becomes seamless to coordinate between our governments for disaster relief. We also want to have a better disaster plan in place so that our response can be quicker and fuller. Our Planning Department is taking the lead on putting that together right now.

Yurok Today: In 2002, there was a catastrophic fish kill on the Klamath River. According to many, this was due to reduced water levels resulting from upstream dams and water diversion. This year the dams come up for re-licensing. Should they be decommissioned?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: The re-licensing process, while technically not a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, feels like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity given the 2002 fish kill. We have seen first-hand what restricted flows on the reserva-

tion can lead to. The Yurok Tribe is pushing for all four dams to be decommissioned. Getting that done will take a colossal effort by

all of the stakeholders in the basin. It will restore the salmon habitat and create a healthier river.

Yurok Today: Yurok culture and language are precious to tribal members. What steps are being taken to keep the culture and language strong?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: We've been talking about our eco-tourism paradigm for economic development. I think that will play a solid role in keeping our Yurok culture and language alive, and in giving an

"I ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO COME TO OUR TRIBAL COUNCIL SESSIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN OUR GOVERNMENT. WE RELY ON TRIBAL MEMBER PARTICIPATION TO HELP GUIDE OUR INITIATIVES. WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU."

economically viable outlet for people who want to stay connected to our traditional culture and values. We also have a very vibrant culture and language program. We have had some troubles with funding levels, so we are working on creative ways to keep those programs running—such as our partnership with Early College of the Redwoods.

Yurok Today: What do you think the

Yurok Tribe and the Yurok Reservation will look like in ten years?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: In ten years, I hope to see a large part if not all of our land returned to us. I hope to see a lot of the economic development that we have been talking about, so we can have economic opportunities that are culturally appropriate as defined by our membership. In ten years, I also see us playing a large role at the state and national level. We are the largest tribe in California, and as such, we should be a large player at the state and national levels. I also hope to see a robust tribal government, with many employees and a substantial revenue stream, so we can provide all the services that our tribal members need and deserve.

Yurok Today: Final thoughts?

Dennis Puz, Jr.: I would like to thank our tribal membership and

our tribal government for giving me the opportunity to fulfill this position. I hope our membership sees positive change. I encourage members to come to our tribal council sessions and participate in our government. We rely on tribal member input and participation to help guide our initiatives. We're here to serve you. Please help us in achieving our goal of making the Yurok Reservation the best it can be.

Yurok Today: Thank you, Executive Director Dennis Puz, Jr.

This interview was conducted by Yurok Today Editor Jeff Riggs.



Photo Arnold Nova

UPCOMING EDUCATION DEPT. EVENTS

March (Date to be determined)
Education Committee Meeting

March 18th 9:00 - 4:00 *Language Gathering*
Klamath Yurok Tribe Office

March 24th at 6:00 p.m. *Movie Night*
"Chicken Little" at Potawot

April 17th & 18th 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. *JOM Spring Break Cultural Activities*
Cuten Office from (Food will be provided.)

April 19th & 20th 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. *JOM Spring Break Cultural activities*
Weitchpec Yurok Tribe Office (Food will be provided.)



Canoe-Building Projects Advancing

Canoe-building was well underway at two separate Klamath locations as *Yurok Today* went to press. At the Early College of the Redwoods, students worked side-by-side with volunteers to carve a 14-foot canoe from an old-growth redwood tree donated by Minot Village Committee. On the

have joined master canoe-builder George Wilson (who has built 8 canoes in his lifetime) in generously volunteering their time to spearhead the effort. The volunteers say they are proud of the Early College students, who have worked hard to make the dream of building the boats come true.



Thomas ("Kanoë") Gordon shares a laugh with Dave Severns
Right: Volunteers carving the canoe

other side of tribal headquarters, an 18-foot canoe, fashioned from an old-growth redwood donated by Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, was also well on its way to completion. The canoes are being made in the traditional style using modern tools and implements. Dave Gensaw and Dave Severns



"Boat-building has been a tradition of the Yurok Tribe since time immemorial, and the boats have been a main means of transportation," Vice-Chairman Thomas P. O'Rourke Sr. told *Yurok Today*. "The skills have been passed down from generation to generation. There are only a few master boat builders left, so it's good to see young people learning to build boats today. It's a way for our traditions and our culture to live on."



MERKIE
continued from page 1

of the sea," says Merkie, referring to the fact that eels subsist on fish blood. A good eel can average 2-3 pounds in size, but in recent years, says Merkie, the catches have been slim. "Why are the eels disappearing?" asks Merkie. "It's a big question mark. I used to catch lots of eels!"

There are different ways to catch eels. Eel hooks are popular, and Merkie has a whole collection of yew wood hooks that he's personally carved by hand. More in use upriver, the trigger net method has the fisherman sitting in a scaffold. The net is put into an eddy, and the fisherman pulls up on the string. Eel baskets made of straight willow and hazel are yet another technique. The baskets are placed above a riffle (a shallow stretch of the river) and checked

daily. Sometimes the eels are even caught by hand.

News that the eels are running tends to spread quickly, and soon the whole town knows! The mouth of the Klamath River is a favored spot for snagging the tasty crea-



tures. "You gotta go by the tides," says Merkie, "and outgoing tides are best." Often harbor seals run the eels in towards the beach, where fishermen patiently wait.

Two things to always keep in mind when you're fishing: watch your fellow fishermen, and never turn your back on the ocean.

Yurok Tribe Job Openings March 2006

Open Until Filled

FT/Reg	Maintenance Worker I	\$ 8.34-\$11.94
FT/Reg	Planning Assistant	\$12.43-\$17.77
PT/Reg	Education JOM Guidance Technician	\$13.56-\$19.33
PT/Reg	Education JOM Tutor	\$ 8.34-\$11.94
PT/Reg	Teacher-Head Start	\$12.62-\$16.02

Join the Clerical, Laborer, Fish Technician and Tutor Pool. Go on line to yuroktribe.org/Departments/Human Resources Download an application, complete and send original signed application to Yurok Tribe, P.O. Box 1027, Klamath, California 95548. For more application information, please contact Laura Borden HR Department, 190 Klamath Boulevard, Klamath, California or call 707-482-1350 ext. 375

All hiring is subject to the Yurok Tribe's hiring preference. You are a valuable asset to our organization. Join or update your TERO skill bank form and return it to the Human Resource Department.



A Winning Season for The Jack Norton Eagles Basketball Team

By Basketball Coach Ryan Offins



The Eagles with Coach Ryan Offins

Let it be known that Jack Norton School has a great basketball team. Jack Norton School is located on the upper reservation in Pecwan and has an enrollment of about 40 students. I have been coaching these kids for two and a half years, and all the players except for one have played for me for two years. The team consists of six girls and four boys. All ten players are tribal members. Of these boys and girls, I have two 8th grade boys and two 8th grade girls. The rest of the players are 6th and 7th graders. This is an important factor because we play all boy teams 95 percent of the time. This season is like the story of David and Goliath, with the Eagles being David!

Our season record is sixteen wins

and four losses. This season we brought home first place trophies from the Burnt Ranch, Orick and Gasquet tournaments. The Eagles also took third place at the Orleans tournament. Last but not least, we received a sportsmanship trophy at the Arcata Christian School tournament, an all 8th grade boys competition. The Eagles received the sportsmanship trophy because of their good behavior on and off the court. I was proud of the team. We gained respect because we gave respect first.

Another highlight of our season is that we have been invited to the Crescent City JayCee's tournament, scheduled for March 3rd and 4th. Being invited to this tournament is a huge step and

honor for the Eagles—it's like making the playoffs in the NBA.

The Eagles play well as a team, they play with a lot of heart, and when times on the court are tough they come together to get the victory. The kids that play for me also work hard in the classroom. Each and every one of my players has maintained an above-average GPA throughout this season. The basketball team has a combined GPA of

approximately 3.0. This is another example of the talented youth we are blessed with in the Jack Norton community.

I would like to thank the faculty of Jack Norton School, Klamath Trinity Unified School District, Northern California Indian Development Council, United Indian Health Services, the Yurok Tribe and the players' parents for supporting the Eagles throughout our season. I would like to end by thanking my basketball team for giving me a 110 percent on and off the court.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Diversity of opinion is very important for the Yurok Tribe. *Yurok Today* welcomes letters to the editor of up to 300 words. Include your full name, address and telephone number (if any); your address and phone number will not be published. We reserve the right to reject letters or edit for clarity, brevity, good taste and accuracy. In order to allow for full diversity, individuals are limited to one letter per newsletter issue. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the tribal council. For mailed or fax submissions, the letter must be signed.

Please Send to:

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FLOOD 2005-6



5TH ANNUAL KLAMATH RIVER CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!

Saturday April 8 is the day to mark on your calendars for the 5th Annual Klamath River Cleanup. Last year, over 150 people volunteered their time—we hope to see you again this year, and some new faces, too!



On the morning of the cleanup, coffee and donuts will be served at Yurok Tribal Office Community Room from 9-9:30. At 10, you'll depart for assigned locations, returning to the tribal office at 1 p.m. where a complimentary lunch will be served.

Solid Waste Management Authority will be providing the dumpsters.

Be sure to pre-register for your free Klamath River Cleanup T-Shirt!

Clockwise from left: Weitchpec Tribal Office: Ground Zero for relief efforts; an overturned vehicle in the water; store flooded; the raging ocean on December 31. Bottom photos Austin Nova.



Yurok Today

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