



Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

Dam Deal Done!

See story on page 3



TALKING SUCCESS



Marjorie Buckskin
VICE CHAIRPERSON

Since my first term as a North District Representative I have always had an open-door policy for all tribal members and staff.

I come from this philosophy because I believe in two age-old truths: "What's good for one is good for all" and "you have to show respect to get

respect."

As your Vice Chairperson it is even more important to me that the people I represent feel completely comfortable coming to me with their concerns, ideas and dreams for the Tribe.

As a little girl and one of eight children growing up on Requa Hill, I remember not having much, hand-me-downs and an ice cream cone was an extravagant surprise. I want children to have more opportunities than I had growing up. I know what it is like to struggle to get what you want. That is why I feel it is important to know what the tribal membership desires from its government.

I understand that every person's point of view is important and valid. As Vice Chairperson I believe it is my job to serve Yurok people. That can only be accomplished with the input of the tribal membership.

If you think the Tribe could be doing something better I want to hear about it. If you feel like the Tribe is doing something outstanding I want to know that too. In addition to my years of service to the Tribe, I have held numerous positions on governing boards. From that experience I have



The Yurok contingent that went to the signing of the KBRA and KHSa stand on the steps of Oregon's capitol building.



Dale Ann Sherman, the Yurok South District Representative, hands a gift from the Tribe to Karuk Chairman, Arch Super.

learned communication is one of the best tools we have in building our collective success. Please schedule an appointment to meet with me or send me an email at mbuckskin@yuroktribe.nsn.us. There is a suggestion box in the lobby at the tribal offices in Klamath and Weitchpec, which is another way to reach me. I invite you to use your ability to continue this discussion about our Tribe. Our future and our future generations depend on it.

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On The Cover

Yurok tribal chairperson Thomas O'Rourke Sr addresses hundreds of supporters of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and the Klamath Hydro-Electric Settlement Agreement. The agreements, which were designed to facilitate the removal of four Klamath River dams, were signed in the rotunda in Salem, Oregon's capital. The Yurok Tribe has played a key role in crafting the agreements and advocating for removal of the fish-killing dams.

Dam removal moving closer

Two final agreements that put into motion the removal of four Klamath River dams and the first large-scale restoration of the river are signed.

Delegates from the 28-member shareholder group that crafted the agreements and their supporters packed the Rotunda inside the Oregon capitol building on February 18, for the signing of the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and Klamath Hydropower Settlement Agreement. The Yurok Tribe is one of the main architects of the agreements. Chairman Thomas O'Rourke Sr. addressed the crowd.

"In times gone by our people were healthy, the river was healthy, and the fish were healthy," O'Rourke said. "Now I look at the river and the river is sick. We are going to set the river free."

In addition to paving the path to the largest dam removal in U.S. history, the agreements provide better quality and quantities of water for fish, reliable power to farmers and a river restoration plan that will be visible from

space once it is complete. The Yurok Tribe has been working aggressively toward dam removal since the dams went up for relicensing in 2004. The dams cause numerous degradations to the river and its fish, such as toxic algal blooms every summer and an environment where fish diseases can thrive. The

administrator and the Secretary of the Interior also spoke at the historic signing.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar applauded the integrity of the agreements.

"Let us build a legacy for the American people that can be emulated across the country and across the world," Salazar said.

Salazar also commented on the broad-ranging support among the truly diverse group of stakeholders and noted that the signing of the agreements is an end to the most "intractable water wars in the country" and begin "the largest river restoration in the world."

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger commended the stakeholders for all of the heavy lifting they have accomplished in crafting successful deals.

"Let me tell you, this was not an easy lift," said the former professional body builder. "It's time to say 'hasta la vista' to the Klamath dams and restore the majestic Klamath River...I can hear the salmon fishes screaming, 'I'll be back.'" The phrases originate



(left to right) Karuk Chariman Arch Super, Yurok Chairman Thomas O'Rourke and Klamath Tribes Joseph Kirk stand in the Oregon capitol building.

*"Now I look at the river and the river is sick.
We are going to set the river free."*

✪ **Thomas O'Rourke Sr., Yurok Chairman** ✪

antiquated structures also block 300 miles of salmon spawning habitat.

The chairs of the Karuk and Klamath Tribes, the governors of California and Oregon as well as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's

from his movies Terminator I and II.

The agreements, which will lead to dam removal in 2020, are the result of hard work put in by all shareholders.

"I commend all of the long hours our tribal staff has put into this seemingly impossible accomplishment. I would like to give special recognition to Yurok Policy Analyst, Troy Fletcher, Senior Tribal Attorney, John Corbett, Fisheries Manager, Dave Hillemeier, Senior Fisheries Biologist, Michael Belchik and former Yurok chairpersons Howard McConnell and Maria Tripp, and the current Yurok council for all of the wisdom and guidance they put into this effort," Chairman O'Rourke said. "If it wasn't for them we would probably be looking at a minimum of another 40 years of a dammed and sick river."

Individual tribal members from the Yurok, Karuk, Hoopa and Klamath Tribes of Oregon also played a crucial role in making a final deal a reality. The group banded together and brought the message in 2004 to Scottish Power that the dams are killing the river, which the Tribe's have managed since time immemorial. Shortly after, the Scotland-based power company sold PacifiCorp to Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway. In 2007 and 2008 the group put pressure, via direct action at its shareholder meetings in Omaha, NE, on the multinational corporation to join the stakeholder group and raze the dams. In 2009, PacifiCorp agreed. At the signing the company's president, Greg Abel, stated that company is committed to dam removal and 2020 is a realistic timeframe.

There is still a lot of work to be completed before the dams are removed. Passing federal legislation to order the dam removal is the next big step. The 28 stakeholder group, which is growing, already has a head start on the effort to successful legislation.

"We already have a lot of support from both parties," said Yurok tribal member and Policy Analyst, Troy Fletcher. "All interested parties need to work hard to make sure legislation happens."

For more information visit yuroktribe.org



Charles Wilkinson, an internationally known Indian Law scholar, critiques the KBRA and KHSA.

The Yurok Tribal Council recently contracted Charles Wilkinson, a leading scholar on Indian law and federal public land law, to critique the Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement and the Klamath Hydroelectric Agreement. Wilkinson's evaluation was part of the extensive legal analysis performed by the tribe to ensure the fortitude of the agreements.

In addition to holding a leadership position in the realm of Indian law, Wilkinson is no stranger to complicated negotiations involving tribes, federal and state governments and a loaded hand of stakeholder groups. Wilkinson facilitated negotiations between the National Park Service and the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe in a tribal land base dispute in Death Valley National Park. At the turn of this century, Congress enacted legislation ratifying the fruits of the agreement. Presently, he is serving as facilitator in far-reaching negotiations between the City of Seattle and the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.

Wilkinson is also a renowned author. Many of his books are standard public and Indian law texts at major universities in the United States. He also writes for general audiences. In his most

recent book, *Blood Struggle-The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* he writes, "Indian sovereignty is one of the noblest ideals that has ever touched my mind — every bit as much so as freedom or justice, to which tribal sovereignty is closely related."

Tribal sovereignty was a major theme at the meeting, which filled an entire Saturday.

Critics of the KBRA and KHSA have said that the Yurok Tribe has not gone far enough to protect the tribe's sovereignty, citing that in the KBRA the Tribe agreed to waive certain past claims against the United States that predate the signing of the agreements. The tribe retains the right to take legal action against the United States once the agreements are signed. The past claims, according to the agreement, have to originate in Oregon, include claims resulting from water management decisions and failure to protect the Tribes' water rights, land, or natural resources due to the loss of water or water rights. Again, these claims are narrowly limited to claims that originated before the ratification of the agreements.

"The decision not to sue the United States is extremely minor," said Wilkinson, who has been studying the agreements since July of 2009. "The consequences (to the tribe's sovereignty) are nearly zero."

Wilkinson praised the Tribal Council for using its sovereignty to seek its own avenue to restore the Klamath, rather relying on an outside entity to do it. He explained the tribe was expressing its sovereignty, rather than repressing it.

"Setting out to accomplish deals and goals is real world sovereignty," Wilkinson said.

Critics, specifically the Hoopa Tribe, have also contended the KBRA doesn't allow for enough water for fish in the interim period before dam removal is actualized. The Hoopa Tribe outlined its concerns in a technical memo claiming the dam deals river flows will dip to far, during that time period, below Dr. Thomas Hardy Phase II Subsistence Criteria minimum accepted

levels, which the Yurok Tribe responded to.

"As a piece of scientific literature, the Yurok memo is in a different league than Hoopa's," Wilkinson said. "The Hoopa memo is a borderline rant."

The Hoopa memo makes claims without citing any sources to back them up, he added. Wilkinson also mentioned that Hardy, an internationally recognized in-stream flow expert, has given his blessing to the agreements.

"Setting out to accomplish deals and goals is real world sovereignty," Wilkinson said. "Sovereignty is the right to decide for yourself. You never said that, but that's how you acted."

Charles Wilkinson, Indian Law Scholar

According to Hardy, the Settlement Agreement does "reflect the necessary balance for agriculture, refuge deliveries, target lake elevations for the endangered Klamath Lake suckers, flood control curve, increased storage capacity of Upper Klamath Lake and factor in reasonable and achievable restoration actions both within

Klamath lake and upstream tributaries."

Wilkinson also spoke about the agreements in a larger context. He stated that the inextricable agreements are the most complex and comprehensive in the history of the United States.

"I see this as an extraordinary and important venture. This is going to be one of the great moments in Yurok history, in Indian history," Wilkinson concluded.



(Right) Former Yurok councilmember Ray Mattz and Sam Gensaw listen in as Charles Wilkinson talks about the agreements.

Tribe wants CA to recognize rights

The Yurok Tribe is taking a multi-faceted approach in participating in the State's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative to ensure the Tribe's customary uses and rights to use the coast and ocean are not restricted.

The Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (MLPAI) is a public-private partnership between the State of California and a hand-full of private foundations to implement the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA), which was signed into law in 1999. The purpose of the MLPA is to redesign California's system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) into a network to increase effectiveness in protecting the marine life and habitats, marine ecosystems and marine natural heritage, as well as to improve recreational, educational and study opportunities provided by marine ecosystems from within mean high tide out to 3 nautical miles.

There are three types of MPAs. The first is a State Marine Reserve, in which all extractive activities are prohibited. In a State Marine Park, all commercial extractive activities are prohibited and potentially some recreational activities. The third is a State Marine Conservation Area where some recreational and commercial extractive activities can be limited.

The North Coast Study Region, which extends from the California/Oregon border to Alder Creek (north of Point Arena), is the fourth of the five identified study regions in the State and is in the MPA design process. To date, the sovereign and aboriginal rights, customary uses, and stewardship role of Tribes and Tribal communities has not yet been acknowledged in the legislation, guiding documents, or implementation in previous regions. This is why



Yurok Council member addresses the Blue Ribbon Task Force

the Yurok Tribe is being proactive, relying on a variant approach both within and outside the MLPAI process.

"The Tribe believes in conservation, but it needs to be done in a competent manner that recognizes the sovereignty of the Tribe, as well as those customary uses that have continued since time immemorial," said Megan Rocha, the Tribe's interim Self Governance Officer.

The Yurok Tribal Council passed a Resolution supporting an amendment to the Marine Life Protection Act, "to ensure that Tribal aboriginal rights and traditional cultural ways, as well as federally-reserved fishing rights and the federal trust responsibilities are recognized and protected... The inalienable aboriginal rights of Yurok People to access and use traditional coastal and marine areas predate and supersede all state and local laws and constitute a vital component of our ancestral and cultural inheritance," and the State must recognize this.

The areas are designed by regional stakeholders, with guidance from a science advisory team. The composition of proposals are then forwarded to

the Blue Ribbon Task Force, responsible for presenting a preferred alternative to the California Fish and Game Commission by December for a final determination. The North Coast Blue Ribbon Task Force includes: William W. Anderson, President, Westrec Marina Management, Inc.; Meg Caldwell, Director and Senior Lecturer on Law, Stanford Law School's Environment and Natural Resources Law and Policy Program; Roberta R. Cordero, Lawyer/Mediator, Co-Founder Chumash Maritime Association; Cindy Gustafson, District General Manager, Tahoe City Public Utility District; Catherine Reheis-Boyd, Chief Operating Officer and Chief of Staff, Western States Petroleum Association; Gregory F. Schem, President and Chief Executive Officer, Harbor Real Estate Group; Jimmy Smith, Chair, Humboldt County Board of Supervisors; and Virginia Strom-Martin, Advocate, Los Angeles Unified School District and Sonoma coast resident

The Yurok Tribal Council is working on many fronts in an effort to drive the process in a way that is respectful of the Tribe's sovereignty and does not impact the continued uses of the ocean like the harvesting of mussels and seaweed, for example.

The Tribe has taken the lead in bringing together Tribes participating in the MLPA process. "The purpose of the coalition is to get together to share information, strategize, and have a more collective and stronger voice," Rocha said.

The Tribe also was instrumental in getting Native representation on the Blue Ribbon Task Force in Roberta Cordero (Chumash), as well as has secured representation on the stakeholder group. The Yurok Tribal Council will also be meeting with officials from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

The public is also an integral part of the process and many Yurok citizens have already participated in the MLPA planning discourse. The approach seems to be making some headway as MLPAI staff and DFG begin to work with the Tribes to seek a better understanding of the issues and to move toward potential resolution. The Tribal Council and staff continue to diligently proceed and encourage participation from Yurok Tribal citizens.

For more information on the Marine Life Protection Act visit: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/mlpa>.

Employee of the year!



MAINTENANCE SPVR. RANDY THOMPSON

Director of the year!



SENIOR ATTORNEY JOHN CORBETT

Hooked on eels for thousands of years

For Sam Gensaw, learning to eel was a solid step on the path to manhood.

"If you can eel you are a step closer to taking care of yourself and your family," said Gensaw, a 16-year-old from Rekwoi.

Learning to eel was a process that involved more than the act of hooking the fish.

"There are steps. You have to learn how to start a fire before you go out and eel for the first time. Just like with salmon fishing where you have to learn how to clean a net before you can set one."

Eeling is also about giving. Every time Gensaw goes down to hook eels at the mouth of the Klamath he washes his hands and face in water and says a prayer.

"You pray to Oregos and the ocean for all it has done," Gensaw said. "I was taught that you give your first eel away."

Gensaw also eels barefoot, shirtless with some Indian necklaces around his neck.

"You can feel the connection, I believe. You know you're there. You know your people have strode on that beach line for thousands of years, doing the same thing you're trying to do, which is feeding your family," Gensaw said.

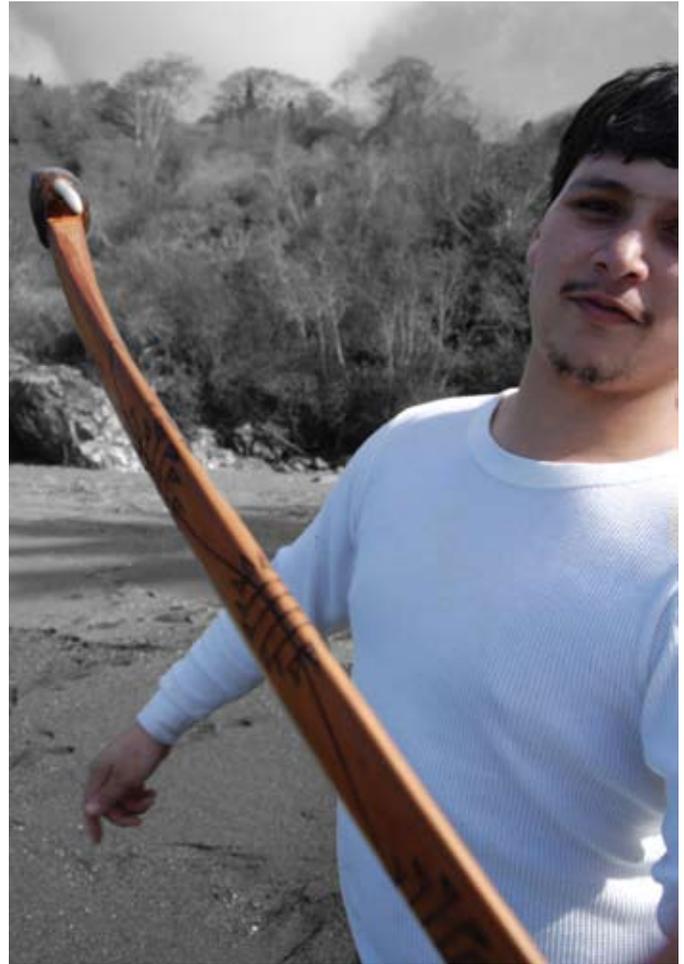
In his short life, Gensaw has seen eel populations dwindle. When his eel hook, made by Aawok Waldo Bob, was taller than him, it was common to see 30 eels caught per trip.

"Nowadays, it's hard to hook a few," Gensaw said. "That's tied to the health of the river."

Much like salmon, eels are born in the river and stay until they are strong enough to live in the ocean. Also like Ney-puy, Key'-ween lose weight as they head up river to spawn and taste different depending on where they are harvested.

The snake-shaped fish runs up the Klamath from December into the early Spring. The fish are harvested at the mouth of the river with hand-carved gaffs called eel hooks.

Eels are high in protein and healthy fat, and were historically and still today, a solid source of winter sustenance for Yurok people. The fish, also known as a Pacific Lamprey, have no fins, scales, bones, or even a jaw and it takes them four to six years to grow 4.5



James Gensaw Sr. holds his traditionally-made eel hook

inches long.

Yurok elders like Junior McKinnon, who grew up without conveniences like refrigeration, know how much Yurok people depended on the winter and spring run fish. McKinnon used to hike for days at a time to areas to gather haa-moh on scorched pieces of ground in the mountains where his father had set fire the previous year.

"If you wanted to have lunch you had to have smoked eels or fish," McKinnon said.

McKinnon was born in Weitchpec and grew up in Morek.

Up river, fishermen like McKinnon use funnel-shaped, hand-crafted baskets to catch the eels. The baskets are made from year-old hazel trees. When hazel is a year the skin adheres to the sticks, making it a more durable, which is essential for baskets that

are put in the river. The highly effective baskets are still used today.

"I remember catching 97 eels in one basket," McKinnon said. "I didn't know that many could even fit."

Catching eels at the mouth with hooks or up river with baskets takes a lot of skill. At the mouth a competent eeler knows when the eels are going to come up the river, has an eye for the nearly camouflaged fish and is lightning quick. Using baskets, the fisherman has to know where to put it. Baskets are normally placed in four to six feet of water where there is a lot of current.

"The basket makes an eddy, a little slack water, that's why the eels go in. They're looking for a place to rest," McKinnon said.

The current keeps the fish trapped in the cone-shaped structures, which are about four feet long.

Eels typically run thickest at the mouth during the brief windows of time when the ocean is calm. It also helps if there is an accompanying warm rain. In the hours after the peak low-tide and during the outgoing tide are the best times to eel.

Fishing for eels down at the mouth is a potentially life threatening proposition. Eelers have to watch out for rogue waves coming in from the ocean and free-floating logs from behind. Eelers also have to make sure to not get over zealous and dart out too far into the river for their prize.

"When you go eeling, it's life or death every time," Gensaw concluded.

Here are a few ways to stay safe:

1. Don't eel alone. The buddy system saves lives.
2. Never turn your back on the ocean, not only for safety, but for respect as well.
3. Wear a life jacket. There are lifejackets on the market that are thin and don't limit mobility.
4. Don't step in front of elders to hook an eel, ever.
5. Listen to the waves. The bigger breakers make a different sound. If you see a big wave coming in let others know.
6. Don't hoot or holler loud unless you are calling for help.
7. Always look out for other eelers.
8. Your hook is your best safety device. If you find yourself being pulled into the ocean dig the butt of your stick into the sand.

Learn about Social Services

✦ Below is a list of services

General Assistance Program (GA)

This program is available to Federally recognized tribal members residing in Humboldt or Del Norte counties who have limited or no income and are not eligible for other public assistance such as TANF and SSI. Participants must meet the eligibility requirements of being unemployable. Assistance is received monthly to meet essential needs. Burial assistance up to \$2,500 is also available through GA.

Yurok Food Distribution Program (FDP)

This program provides an alternative to food stamps for low-income tribal members residing within rural areas of Humboldt, Del Norte and Curry Counties and to other low income individuals residing on the Yurok reservation. FDP offers USDA Food Commodities as well as fresh fruit and produce. A "tailgate" option for delivery is available. You cannot receive commodities if you are already receiving food stamps or SSI (California only).

Indian Child Welfare Program (ICWA)

This program assists Yurok families when a child is removed from a Yurok parent or guardian. The ICWA Advocate attends court to ensure that the Indian Child Welfare Act is being followed and to place children with relatives or other Tribal members. Yurok ICWA recruits, trains, and designates tribal foster homes. The Program can help your home become a tribally certified foster home. ICWA Advocates are located at the Klamath and Eureka offices.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP assists low-income Yurok families with their energy assistance needs. Payments are made on behalf of Yurok Tribal members for energy needs such as wood, propane, and electricity. This program has limited funding and is only available until funds are depleted.

Yurok Youth

Yurok Youth teaches traditional values and uses cultural activities to help young people choose healthy and productive lifestyles. After school activities and other prevention and youth development activities are offered throughout the year. Yurok Youth staff also work with the juvenile justice system providing case management, referrals, and diversion strategies.

Social Workers

Social Workers provide assistance to children, adults, and families within the Yurok community. Social Workers help tribal members with housing, domestic violence and any other emergencies an individual or family may encounter. Social Workers may make referrals for family members to community agencies with the goal of improving the home environment so that children, families, and elders will remain safe. Social Workers are located at the Klamath and Eureka offices.

TANF

Tribal families living in Humboldt or Del Norte County (except Hoopa) who qualify for this program are able to choose whether to receive services from the county (Cal Works) or the Tribe. Yurok TANF program provides cash assistance to low income families for the support of dependent children. It also provides education, training and other services to assist adults in the family to make the transition from welfare (dependence) to work (independence). Each participating family will work with staff to develop a plan for independence tailored to their unique needs and career interests.

Stop the signs from disappearing



The Yurok Tribe recently installed road signs from Weitchpec to the end of Highway 169.

A number of the road signs, which were put in place to reduce response time for fire and medical services, have been stolen. The signs, if left in place, will definitely save lives. There are a number of elders who live in area of the Reservation and could very realistically need emergency services at any time. **Call 1-800-78-Crime to anonymously report theft. Those who give information that leads to an arrest will receive \$1,000 reward.**

Be an advocate

The Court Appointed Special Advocates Northern California Inter-Tribal Program needs volunteers. All trainees must participate in at least 30 hours of training and complete a background investigation before they can serve as a CASA volunteer. There will be trainings held each Saturday and Sunday from March 6 to March 21. Those completing the training will become sworn officers of the court. To register contact Recruitment and Training Coordinator, Isaac Kinney at (530) 276-7554 or email him at isaack09@gmail.com.

Census Bureau hiring

Recruiting efforts are underway to hire field staff to assist and complete the 2010 Decennial Census. These are part-time temporary positions that often require evening and weekend work.

Approximately one million people nationwide will be hired in the spring of 2010 to complete the Census Bureau's constitutionally mandated headcount.

Most fieldwork positions last a few weeks or more (depending upon the workload in specific geographic areas) and pay \$11.50 or more per hour. Mileage is reimbursed at government rates (currently fifty-five cents per mile).

Everyone hired by the Census Bureau must take a 30-minute basic skills exam. These sessions are being scheduled here in Klamath over the next two weeks.

The U.S. Census Bureau is an equal opportunity employer. To apply call toll-free 1-866-861-2010.

For more information contact: Norm Dutra, Local Census Office Manager at (707) 826-5172 or Fred Hebert, Assistant Manager for Recruiting, at (707) 482-5173.

MARCH

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28	29 IPM Agenda Items and Dept. Reports Due! Pocahontas District Mtg 7-9pm @Waicut Firehouse	30 Director's Mtg 9:00am *SC Yurok Language 5:30pm *SC	31 JOM Parent Mtg 5:30 @WTO LHHS Annual Awards Ceremony @Blue Lake - 12pm	<table border="1"> <tr> <th colspan="7">Feb 2010</th> <th colspan="7">Apr 2010</th> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td> <td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> <td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td> <td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td> <td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>		Feb 2010							Apr 2010							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	28	29	30	31				28	29	30	31				
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25	26 IPM Agenda Items and Dept. Reports Due! Pocahontas District Mtg 7-9pm @Waicut Firehouse LHHS Finance Mtg	27 Director's Mtg 9:00am *CC LHHS Board Mtg Yurok Language 5:30pm *SC	28 JOM Parent Mtg 5:30 @WTO	29	30																																																																																																				

Tribe getting an Early Head Start

There is an urgent need for early childhood services and jobs on the eastern portion of the Yurok Reservation.

That's about to change.

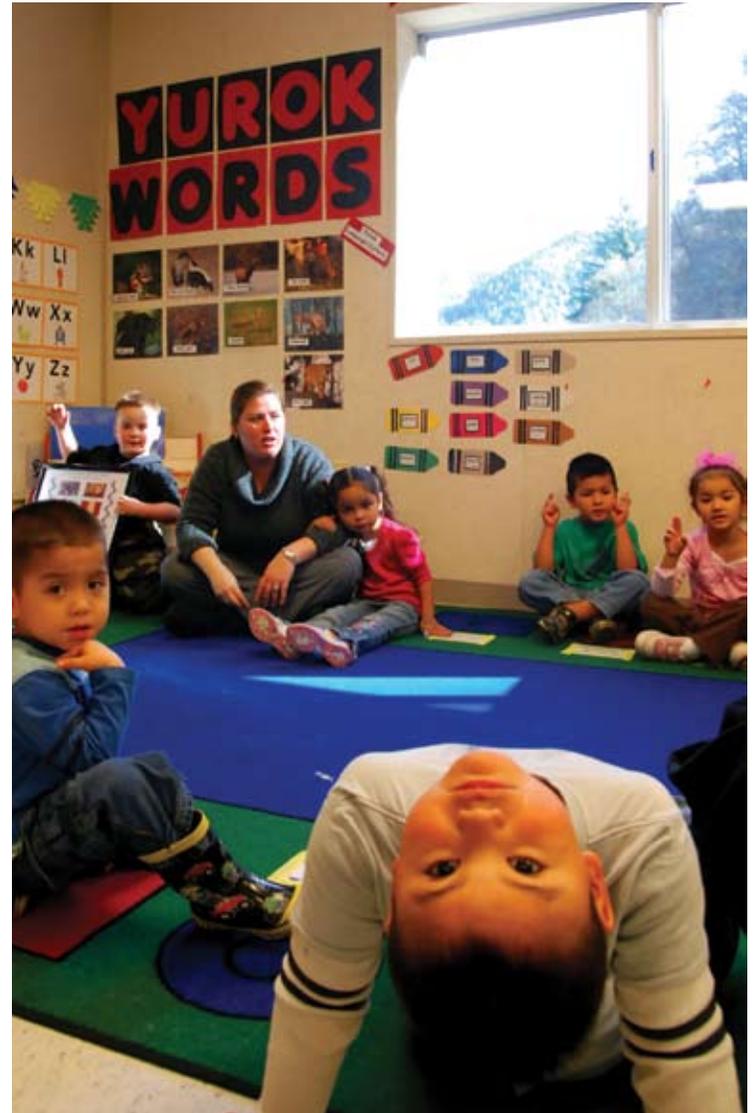
The Yurok Tribe recently received a \$1,017,553 grant from the Department of Health and Human Services to operate an Early Head Start program to accommodate families to the South and East of the reservation, where early childhood services and parenting educational resources have been virtually nonexistent.

"The Early Head Start will allow us to implement crucial services, like prenatal care, to families who have or are expecting children," said Jim McQuillen, who is the Tribe's Education Director and a licensed family therapist. "From zero to three years of age is such a critical time in a child's development. We are beyond elated to be able to reach out to those families and their children because parents need the additional support to help build a strong foundation within our little ones."

The Early Head Start program will serve parents with children 0 to 3 years of age and be based at the Tribe's new Head Start building in Klamath.

Newly trained tribal employees will now be able to visit tribal member parents once a week to help meet family needs. As many as five times per month, prenatal groups will meet to talk about parenting and get to know and support one another.

The Tribe has been trying to open an early childcare facility since it moved its base from Eureka to Klamath



Toss McCovey learns Yurok words at the Tribe's new Head Start building.

"I think this is a great opportunity for parents to learn to use the language with their kids,"

✦ Yurok Tribal Member, Annelia Hillman ✦

in 1994. Past surveys of tribal members indicate that an Early Head Start is a pressing need.

"I feel that we have not been able to help the neediest of children and families. This gives us that

opportunity," said Dana Miguelena, the tribe's Head Start Director.

Some of the services include: prenatal care, birthing classes, health and nutrition classes, childcare, linkage to other needed services, and Yurok cultural education.

"Parents need a place that's safe and provides enrichment for their children," McQuillen said.

The tribe also plans to have Yurok language immersion classes for toddlers at the Early Head Start building in Klamath as well as Yurok language lessons in the South and the East areas.

Tribe to certify teachers

"I think this is a great opportunity for parents to learn to use the language with their kids," Hillman said. Hillman's 10-month old, Ihsikihara E-kor, spoke his first word in Karuk, her husband's language. "I can say his first word was not English," Hillman offered with a smile.

While the Early Head Start is open to all ethnic groups with children 0 to 3, there is a preference for low income families, Yurok tribal member families, special needs children and homeless families.

The Early Head Start will also create as many as 16 jobs in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, both on and off the Yurok Reservation. Please contact the Tribe's Education Department to inquire about work or to enroll in the program.

"This is going to mean new employment opportunities for community members who have a passion to work with small children and families," said Yurok Chairman Thomas O'Rourke Sr., in response to the grant award.

The Yurok Tribe is one of the largest employers in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

The Yurok Tribe is in the process of developing an evaluation that will, if passed by the participant, give Yurok speakers a California single subject teaching credential and the ability to teach the language in state funded public schools.

Since the passage of AB 544, which enables federally recognized tribes to credential their own teachers, the Yurok Tribe's Education Department has been working in overdrive to create the competency test.

"By the summer we expect that to be credentialing native teachers. By the fall we intend to have a slate of credentialed Yurok language teachers," said Yurok tribal member Carole Lewis, a Language Coordinator for the Tribe and advocate for the bill.

The benefits of AB544 cannot be overstated. While Yurok is taught in some public schools, there are yards of red tape that the Tribe and the individual school districts have to cut through every year to make it happen. The bill eliminates that difficult and time-consuming process. The Tribe will be setting its own standards of what knowledge must be possessed in order to become a teacher. The Yurok Tribal Council will make the final decision on who is able to become a language instructor. The credentialed teachers will be able to teach in state-run elementary, middle and high schools.

"We literally have hundreds of kids who learn a little Yurok in school. Now the language will be part of the school system," said Lewis, who plans on testing for a credential.

"We will be able to cast our language restoration net that much deeper into our pool of eager language learners,"

said Yurok tribal member and Education Director Jim McQuillen. The Yurok language has been attacked by non-Indians and the government system from several directions starting with the Gold Rush. From the 1850s into the first quarter of the 20th century Yuroks were shipped off to government-run boarding schools and physically and mentally abused for speaking the language.

"This is a quite a change from those days," McQuillen said. "It's solid step in the right direction. Now the system can help our people re-learn the Yurok language and heal from the injustices done".

Currently only Hoopa High and McKinleyville High are the only high schools offering Yurok language courses that meet the world language requirements for entry into the California State University and University of California college system. The Tribe wants to see other public high schools and the K-8 schools to get the courses offered. Yurok language course offerings give Yurok students another good reason to attend school and they validate the Yurok culture as being important enough for the public education system to add to the curriculum menu.

The Yurok Education Department is asking that all interested in teaching language keep a close eye on the process. The Department will soon be giving would be instructors information on what is expected of language teacher. Please check the Education Department's website frequently. <http://yuroktribe.org/departments/education/education.htm>

Meet the new Yurok Chief

The Yurok Tribe's new Department of Public Safety Chief is a progressive thinker.

Thorin J.D. McCovey-Bigovich learned that from his parents, mother former Yurok Councilmember Vlayn McCovey and father George Bigovich.

"I learned many important lessons from my parents, as we all do, one very important message was tolerance" McCovey said.

McCovey, a Yurok Tribal member, descends from the village of Notchko on his mother's side and Redwood Creek on his father's side.

Following a stint in the United States Army, he was hired by the Yurok Tribe and has been on the fast track up the ranks of the department since day one. After only two years on the job he was made a Field Training Officer. His role was to make sure his future peers had the essential tools to do the job efficiently.

"It's important to make sure people who come to work here understand the Yurok Tribe. The issues aren't the same as mainstream society, the values aren't the same and the demographic is not the same," McCovey said.

He was the youngest officer to make Sergeant in department's history, gaining the position after three and half years on the job. He is one of the few officers and the only Yurok tribal member to become cross-deputized in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

"I always took on a lot of responsibility," McCovey said. "I welcome the responsibility that



Thorin McCovey is the new Chief of the Yurok Department of Public Safety.

"I welcome the responsibility that comes with running the department."

✪ Yurok Police Chief Thorin McCovey ✪

comes with running the department. I remain humble but have confidence in myself that I'll continue to do a good job."

As the new Public Safety Chief, one of McCovey's main goals is elevate the level of service provided by the department. He believes he can accomplish this through training and building upon existing relationships with other law enforcement agencies.

"I want to build the department in a positive direction. We will require higher standards moving forward. Ultimately the department will have increased support from the community and increased credibility in the law enforcement community," McCovey said. "I have a plan and I

believe it to be solid."

"It is important to me that all officers and staff are professional, know their jobs well and work for the good of the community," McCovey said.

Becoming a successful law enforcement officer was a goal of McCovey's for a long time. "When I first thought of a law enforcement career I was a teenager. I've worked toward my goals since back then, from my time in the Army to what I've done while serving this community" McCovey explained.

On his time in serving his country and the community McCovey concluded, "I am proud of my service."

Yurok remembers doing battle

For Gerald O'Connor, a Yurok, joining the military at 17 was an easy choice.

"My father was in the Navy, also," O'Connor said. It was an automatic choice," the decorated Navy man said of his 1944 decision to fight in World War II.

At the time he was living in Point Retreat, 40 miles from Juneau, where his parents worked as lighthouse keepers.

Shortly after enlisting, O'Connor was whisked away to Camp Schumacher in San Francisco. Before he knew it, he was serving his country as a radio man on a "brand new wonderful looking ship," a destroyer named the USS Hailey - DD556.

"It was right at the peak of the war. They were taking as many guys as they could get," O'Connor said. "It was fast. You were a kid and pretty soon you were at war."

He and his crew were headed off to Guam to stage in the Marshall Islands before heading for the unknown, and at the time, dangerous shores of Guam.

"It was my first campaign. I didn't even realize that they had any guns and that they were going to shoot at us," O'Connor said. "We were headed for hell that's for sure; headed into hell at 55 knots."

That's where he would participate in his first of eight of the 13 major battles fought in the South Pacific. "We were the first ship to draw fire and the last ship to leave Guam, secure," O'Connor said. It was my first campaign. I didn't even know they had guns and were going to shoot at us."

From Guam, Gerald and his crew left for the Philippines where Japanese became very aggressive with their tactics aimed at sinking the fighting boats.

"Boy, I tell those Japs were fighting for their very existence," O'Connor respectfully said. "That was when the Kamikazes started. It was later that it got bad."

In the Philippines, O'Connor and his fellow Navy men stayed at there battle stations for 90 days straight. They're job was to draw fire from the shore so the American ships would know where to return fire. The mission was to clear the beach for the Marines.

The worst came during the United State's effort to take control of the Philippine islands. It was the biggest battle in the Philippines. The Navy had to contend with Japanese destroyers and bomb laded Japanese planes. Ships were sinking all around O'Connor's ship. Two suicide planes, with 500 pound bombs strapped to their hulls, nearly hit his ship.

"They'd be right over you. You could see the struts on their wheels," the brave veteran said. "We were so close; I

actually saw the conning tower on the Yamato." "All it takes is one and you're a goner."

O'Connor would know. He saw it happen. In one instance during this battle he saw a Navy ship with 400 U.S. soldier sink in the blink of an eye. "Two suicide bomber hit the torpedoes and 400 men were instantly gone," O'Connor explained.

O'Conner recounted how his ship, the USS Hailey, was off shore at Iwo Jima during the raising of the American flags atop Mount Suribachi.

O'Conner's ship was also off shore at Saipan when over 22,000 Japanese civilians, including women and children committed suicide by jumping to their death off the cliffs of Saipan. This image haunted O'Conner for the rest of his life.

Somehow, O'Connor's ship the USS Hailey was one out of 47 that made it to the end of the war having fought in the Marshall Islands, Manila Bay, New Guinea, the Solomon's, Marianas, Guam, Iwo Jima, Palaus, Manus Islands, Formosa, Saipan and Okinawa.

As O'Connor was heading back, suicide bombers were still on the attack, but that's not how he was nearly fatally wounded. He was out on the deck and saw a dirty helmet that looked out of place. For some reason, he picked up the helmet and put it on his head. Seconds later, a projectile bomb exploded over the mast of his ship. A three inch piece of shrapnel lodged in his helmet. "The captain could see I was all white. He said, 'you can take that helmet home if you want,'" O'Connor said.

The Vet lost hearing in one ear, but that didn't stop him from living a full life. After he returned home he made a career for himself as a Senior Captain tug boat operator in Seattle. Mostly, he kept his war experiences to himself, "I figured that's the only way I could make it by not telling anybody"

During the last years of his life, Gerald O'Conner and Aawok Kenny Childs initiated the Yurok Color Guard and volunteered at the Yurok Tribal Office to assist local veterans apply for veterans disability benefits. In late 2009, Gerald himself was awarded veteran's disability benefits for his own service connected injuries sustained during his service in WWII. After he received his first disability check, he commented to a fellow disabled veteran "I finally understand why you always have a smile on your face."

Aawok Gerald O'Conner, passed away before this article was finished.

Opportunity knocks: Smokers listen

George Smoker knows when opportunity knocks, it's best to answer.

George and his wife Marla will never forget the day they were asked to take over ownership and operation of Redwood Coffee Service, a local coffee distribution company, on one-night's notice.

"I didn't drink much coffee and my wife didn't drink coffee at all," George said. George, who recently retired after decades working as a stone mason and brick layer, was asked to take over the 20-year-old business after the former owner passed away. George knew the previous owner through his connection in the classic car community in Northern California. "We used to go to the same car shows. It was a very terrible thing with his passing," George said.

His family asked George to take over the business because he was the perfect candidate for the job--retired and hard working. Even though Smoker was retired, he was itching to get back to work, so he took on the challenge.

"I don't know what retirement is. It is just a word to me," the 66 year-old explained. "You can't stop. If you stop you're in trouble."

However, going back to physically demanding work was not an option. George had to undergo 12 surgeries to fix problems he contracted doing masonry work. "Physically, I'm pretty well done," Smoker said.

The coffee business became the perfect opportunity for George to do something productive, augment his pension and spend time with his sweetheart. With Marla's help and hard work, the Smokers were able to continue providing services to the company's existing clients, one of which is the Yurok Tribe, and even cultivate new clients. Redwood Coffee Service sells a variety of coffee and coffee related products to businesses in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

"Gold Rush Coffee is our biggest seller," George said.

One skill George had to pick up in short order was being able to fix coffee machines. Since George's favorite past time is restoring classic cars, repairing the machine's came naturally.

"He's really good at mechanical stuff," said Marla, who met her husband at a classic car show in Redding.

George Smoker was born in Crescent City, CA and raised in the village of



George and Marla Smoker stand next to the Redwood Coffee Service's delivery truck.

"YOU CAN'T STOP. IF YOU STOP, YOU'RE IN TROUBLE."

✧ **George Smoker** ✧

Weych-pues. His mother's side of the family are Reeds and his father's side are Smokers.

Compared to doing masonry work the coffee business has been a breeze. "It's the easiest job I've ever had," Smoker said with a smile.

"George and I are excited about the business and we enjoy working together," Marla added.

To order coffee contact Redwood Coffee Service at 707-443-2363 and leave a message.

Yurok Business Spotlight

This is the first of a new addition to Yurok Today. The publication will highlight on Yurok businesses in each edition. Please contact Matt Mais at (707) 482-1350 to participate. ✧



Supporters of the 28-member stakeholder group, which crafted the dam removal deals, and members of the media cram the Rotunda in the Oregon capitol building to celebrate the signing of the final agreements.



Yurok Today

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