



Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

Tribe takes aim at lead threat in Yurok ancestral territory

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Tribe starts info campaign re: lead

Yurok people believe humans are inextricably linked to the natural environment.

Human activity can be a benefit or a detriment to any given ecosystem. One can vividly see this concept at work on a short trip over Bald Hills in the fall. Elk and deer can be viewed enjoying the new green grass produced by fires intentionally set last year under the advisement of the Yurok Tribe.

Individuals, specifically hunters, can also help manage for the abundance and health of wildlife. The best part is, it can involve harvesting tasty and nutritious game. The extinction of the California grizzly and the gray wolf has moved human hunters into the role of the primary apex predator in the forests and prairies. Top predators are a critical part of every ecological system. In the Pacific Northwest, they made food more readily accessible for scavenging animals, like raccoons, coyotes and opportunistic birds of prey. For example, when a wolf pack finished feeding on a large elk there was always something left over for the carrion eaters. Hunters can serve this same purpose by leaving gut piles in the woods. However, depending on the type of ammunition used to make the kill, the offal piles may be harmful to wildlife and the ecosystem.

Fragmented lead ammunition remaining in carrion is toxic to all scavengers, most notably to opportunistic large raptors like golden eagles, bald eagles and California condors.

The Yurok Tribe recently received a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Native



Yurok Senior Wildlife Biologist, Chris West, tests various types of copper ammunition for accuracy and consistency.

Americans grant to inform tribal and non-tribal citizens of the risks associated with using lead ammunition and to promote alternatives to lead. The hope of the “Hunters as Stewards” campaign is that hunters, given access to the best available information, will discontinue the use of lead bullets in the field for harvesting wildlife. Plink on with lead ammo.

In the same vein, the Tribe is studying the habitat in and around Yurok Ancestral Territory to see if it can once again sustain a California condor population. Lead ammunition fragments in carrion are the greatest limiting factor in reintroduced condor populations, and the biggest

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Yurok tribal member and Wildlife Technician, Tiana Williams tests copper rifle ammunition for accuracy and consistency.

challenge for wildlife managers trying to recover the species.

Hunters started using lead ammunition centuries ago, even though it has been linked to serious health risks since the time of the Roman Empire. This is primarily because it is dense, flies fast, and breaks apart upon impact, which makes it very efficient at dropping big game. The breaking apart makes it lose energy, which is then transferred to shock in the body of the shot animal.

“We would like hunters to look closely at information available from current research that examines ammunition fragmentation and lead toxicity in humans and wildlife and decide whether that’s something they want to consume and/or put into the environment,” said Chris West, who is the Yurok Tribe’s Senior Wildlife Biologist and a rabid hunter. “I think, by nature, most hunters are critical thinkers and conservationists. Hunters generally want to take care of the forest so that it can continue to provide for them and their families.”

When a large caliber lead bullet enters a big game animal it fragments into pieces so small they cannot be seen by the naked eye. The dust-sized particles of lead can be found up to a foot deep in the animal, and even a foot away from the path made by the main part of the bullet. When eaten, lead bio-accumulates or is stored in the tissues of humans and animals. Once levels get too high it can degrade a person’s vascular, renal, nervous and reproductive systems. In other words, lead can compromise nearly every important system sustaining the human body. More sinister is the effect lead has on development of the young. Children with only 0.0001 grams of lead per liter of blood have an average IQ 6.2 points lower than children with 0.00001 grams of lead per liter of blood. This can be the difference of only a couple of lead ammunition harvested meals per week.

“There is a massive body of evidence that shows lead is extremely dangerous for humans and animals to consume,” said Yurok Wildlife Technician Tiana Williams, who holds a degree in Biochemical Sciences from Harvard University and is also an avid hunter.

The use of lead in paint was banned in 1978, gas in 1986 and in shotgun shells used to kill ducks in 1991. Lead ammo is banned in Southern California to protect condors,



These are some of the rifle rounds used during a recent test.

which often have to be treated for lead poisoning or die after consuming a lead laced gut piles and carcasses. The high numbers of condors emergency transported to zoos for treatment every hunting season clearly shows that bans are not effective in preventing access to lead by wildlife.

There are several alternatives to lead ammunition, the most common being made of copper, however, all are accurate and have good stopping power. Modern copper bullets have just as much shock force as lead ammunition. They also fly at a higher velocity and open up, due to intentional cuts in the tips made during manufacture, on impact. This opening is called controlled expansion and often creates even bigger holes in targets than lead ammunition. During the first year of the grant the Wildlife Program will be reaching out the communities in Yurok ancestral territory at the ground level, dispersing information in a myriad of ways.

The Yurok Wildlife Program, with the help of Bullets and Brass and the Institute for Wildlife Studies will be holding three shooting demonstrations over the next year. Bullets and Brass will provide its expertise in gun mechanics and Institute for Wildlife Studies will be providing lead-free ammunition for attendees at the shooting events to try out. The shooting demonstrations will involve shooting lead and non-lead ammunition into water-filled barrels to assess fragmentation. It will also include shooting into ballistic gelatin so participants can view bullet expansion, fragmentation and penetration.

“We want hunters to have all of the information they need to decide for themselves if wildlife-friendly ammunition is the way to go,” West said.

Also in the first year, the Wildlife Program will purchase an x-ray machine capable of viewing lead particles in game shot with lead bullets.

“It is really powerful to see firsthand how much lead will fragment in an animal like a deer,” said Williams.

The Wildlife Program will also be exchanging copper ammunition for lead bullets in an effort to ensure less lead enters the food chain. Copper ammunition is difficult to get anywhere within a 100 miles of the Reservation. Redwood Marine in Eureka is the only store that sells it reliably.

Most ammo is sold at big box stores, and none of these have non-lead ammo.

The program will also develop a regulatory framework for the Yurok Department of Public Safety Officers to carry copper ammo to be used for euthanizing injured or problem animals.

Please listen for announcements on the radio and look for notices in local newspapers advertising the shooting events.



Congratulations, Councilman Myers!

Election Board Chairwoman Betty Brown swears in Pecwan District Representative, Richard Myers. Myers will be serving his fifth consecutive term. He has served six terms in the Pecwan District.

THPO offers thanks to all who made raffle so successful

The Yurok Tribe's Tribal Heritage Preservation Office would like to offer a big thanks to all who participated in the largely successful Cemetery Restoration Raffle.

The fundraiser made nearly \$500, which will allow for the continuation of restoring and improving Yurok family cemeteries. It will also be used for fencing and other necessary supplies to keep the cemeteries in a condition that honors those who have passed on.

Thank you to all of the people who purchased raffle tickets and donated so many wonderful raffle items.

Panel accepts the 33-stakeholder proposal

The board added a last-minute amendment that may hurt tribes

The Marine Life Protection Act's Blue Ribbon Task Force voted to accept the North Coast Regional Shareholder Group's proposal of marine protected areas. However, the Task Force added a last-minute amendment to the proposal, which it has not made available to the public. The plan and amendment will be forwarded to the California Fish and Game Commission.

"The Tribe has made repeated attempts to get a copy of the amendment to no avail," said John Corbett, the Yurok Tribe's Senior Attorney. "We could agree with what's in the amendment or we could be totally against it depending on what's in it."

According to Cindy Gustafson, who is the Chair of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, the amendment "does not alter the placement of MPAs developed by the shareholders, but strengthens the level of protection to be consistent with other regions in the state..."

While the Tribe has not relinquished any of its hunting or gathering rights, the amendment could create regulatory conflicts for tribal members because the State of California refuses to recognize tribal rights.

"The devil is in the details," Corbett said.

The purpose of the Marine Life Protection Act Initiative is to create a system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to protect marine ecosystems from within mean high tide out to 3 nautical miles. 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.

Tribal harvest of ocean resources has had no negative effects on the marine environment.

Under the proposal the North Coast Regional Shareholders' proposal, Yurok gathering practices in the Tribe's ancestral territory would be minimally impacted by the protected areas. There is an area between Redwood Creek and Gold Bluffs Beach where only crab, salmon and surf fish can be harvested. There is also a special closure for Wilson Rock, which is one of most densely populated bird nesting grounds on the coast. The Shareholder's proposal was the only unified plan in any of the Initiative's study regions. It was also supported by 31 local



Reps from tribal nations prepare to enter a Blue Ribbon Task Force meeting in Fort Bragg.

government and other agencies.

The Initiative, which is publically and privately funded, drew substantial criticism in Indian Country all over the United States. After participating in the public process, many tribal members concluded that the Initiative did not honor the fact that the State of California cannot limit tribes' ability to traditionally gather coastal and oceanic resources. Yurok tribal members were particularly incensed that the Initiative's Science Advisory Team would not allow Yurok tribal biologists to participate on the science panel. The Tribe made no less than seven attempts to present to the panel and were turned down. Hundreds of tribal members from a number of tribal nations disrupted and took over Science Advisory Team and Blue Ribbon Task Force meetings in an effort to better inform the process and protect tribal traditions that have taken place since time immemorial.

The Tribe believes the MLPA process should also address major marine resource issues such as the collapse of the Sacramento salmon, endangered Coho, collapse of candlefish, and the diminished Pacific Lamprey (eel) populations. The process should also restrict offshore oil drilling and consider the effects of a warming ocean.

The California Fish and Game Commission will review, approve or amend the proposal in early 2011.

Two Departments restore critical habitat in Terwer

Fisheries and Watershed stop sediment and enhance wetlands

An ecosystem is much like a perpetually moving, complex machine. Its parts all serve a purpose. If a minor part is removed it will begin to act differently, inefficiently. If an essential part is taken away, the system will fail.

A critical part of andromous fish-populated ecosystems is wetlands. Wetlands are where baby salmon, including the threatened

Coho salmon, and steelhead hide from swift winter currents and predators. The marshes are filled with an abundance of tiny invertebrates, Coho's favorite food. They also provide seasonal homes for numerous other aquatic species and birds, especially water fowl. Wetlands also act as a natural filter for the river, removing man-made contaminants. During the summer months the bogs seep cool water into the creek.

This November, the Yurok Tribe's Fisheries Program is finishing work on a wetlands enhancement project on the lower section of Terwer Creek. Excessive logging reduced this once prime salmon spawning and rearing stretch of water to a singular sediment-filled stream channel, prone to eroding its barren banks during high water.

Using everything from heavy machinery to their hands, Yurok tribal fisheries biologists and technicians worked to restore complexity to the habitat for the benefit of juvenile salmon, steelhead and pacific lamprey. The crew dug new side channels and lined them with willows to fortify the banks. Large wood pieces were placed in the channels and in the actual creek to slow the water and separate silt.

Willow baffles were planted to act as shields protecting the compromised river bank from further erosion. Conifers such as Sitka Spruce, Douglas fir and Western Red Cedar, along with Big Leaf Maple and cottonwood were planted to one day shade the waterways and help with bank stabilization. Existing off channel ponds were deepened

to give juvenile Coho and other salmon species a safe haven when the creek is running at maximum flow. Exits were also created so the small fish can exit the deep pools when the water drops.

"Coho heaven is what we created," said Senior Fisheries Biologist, Monica Hiner, of the NOAA funded project.

Last year, Fisheries

Biologists found a Coho tagged with a Passive Integrated Transponder in one of the off-channel ponds. Karuk biologists had previously tagged the fish on Independence Creek, which is 106 river miles up the Klamath. The Yurok Tribe also placed a PIT tag receiver in Terwer as part of this project to monitor the success of these restoration sites and to help guide future restoration efforts.

"Fish are using these ponds as a refuge during high water," said Dave Weskamp, a Yurok Tribal Fisheries Biologist. "We've made it easier for the fish by improving their over-winter rearing habitat and radically reducing the amount of erosion that creek has been dumping into the Klamath for decades."

Terwer Creek is 14-miles long and drains into the



Yurok Fisheries Technician, Delmer "Seagull" Jordan runs a backhoe on the Terwer project.



Clear water flows down Terwer Creek after the first fall rains.

Klamath about five miles from the ocean. Terwer is one of the best Reservation streams for producing Chinook and Coho salmon, steelhead trout, coastal cutthroat trout, and Pacific lamprey. The project is located 2 miles upstream from its confluence with the Klamath.

Above the project, the Yurok Tribal Watershed Restoration Department worked this fall to permanently remove other unnatural sediment inputs, mainly caused by failing roads. The Watershed's crew removed 15 deteriorating stream crossings on the nearly 26 miles of old logging roads. Where the crossings were taken out, the team replanted the area with native vegetation to stop future sedimentation. The crew removed more than 14,000 yards of silt that would have entered the creek.

The decommissioned logging route was also re-graded to disconnect the road and ditch from stream channels. Additionally, cross-road drains were created to disperse water from the road in a more natural way. These and other fish-friendly road stabilization techniques saved another 11,000 yards of sediment from entering the creek.

"The Watershed Crew's work to cut off the sediment sources will be a huge factor in the success of this project," Weskamp concluded.

Fisheries studying kwo'-ror', using forensic technology

When Yurok elder Raymond Mattz was a child his mother used to ask him and his brothers to go catch enough candlefish for dinner. It was always a competition to see who could get to the river first because one dip with an a-frame net would gross enough of the delicious and nutritious, winter-run fish to fill a five gallon bucket. Whoever made it to the river first got to catch the fish.

"I always won because I was the fastest," Mattz remembered. "There were millions of them."

Mattz also recalled watching then Senator John F. Kennedy give a speech at the opening of the Trinity River Dam in 1960, which was built to divert water to California's central Valley and create electricity. Candlefish are called kwo'-ror in the Yurok language.

For Yurok people, kwo'-ror were a solid supplement of protein and fat during the winter months when other foods were scarce.

Mattz saw the runs of eulachon diminish nearly to the point of near extinction, which is something that still bothers him today. Last March, the federal government listed candlefish as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. According to the justification for listing the species, the federal government cited reduced water flows, habitat changes and diminishing plankton in the ocean as potential threats to the seven to ten inch fish.

This fall the Yurok Tribe was awarded a \$535,000 grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to determine if candlefish still exist in the Klamath and Mad Rivers as well as Redwood Creek. Candlefish were historically found from Northern California to Alaska, but candlefish have not been found in the Klamath, Mad River, or Redwood Creek since the late 1980's.

"We are doing a study to benefit fish, not just sit on a shelf somewhere," said Yurok Senior Fisheries Biologist, Michael Belchik.

Candlefish are also known as eulachon or "hooligan" in southern Canada. The name candlefish comes from the abundance of oil found in the fish, which will actually burn like a candle after it is dried.



Candlefish, caught near the Klamath Glen circa 1950, drip from an a-frame dip net.

Candlefish, like salmon, are born in freshwater and after a period time enter the ocean. The Klamath population of candlefish reenters the river from January to April after three years in the ocean, spawn in gravelly sections of river and die. Further north, candlefish live up to five years in the ocean. Mattz remembers watching swarms of fish spawn at Lamb's Riffle, which is about ten miles from the Klamath's confluence with the ocean.

What is not known is whether the anadromous fish return to the same water body it was born in. It is possible, that candlefish are like Pacific lamprey and spawn in rivers different from where they hatched, according to Belchik.

Two fisheries crews will dip net, seine and plankton net for candlefish in extremely challenging winter conditions from January through April in the Klamath, Mad and Redwood Creek.

The Yurok Tribe's Fisheries Department will also use high-tech DNA amplification techniques to discover if the fish still return to this area. This DNA amplification technique can detect extremely low levels of candlefish DNA from a water sample. "We are going to look really hard for Eulachon, really hard, for three years," Belchik said.

If candlefish are found in the study area, a restoration and recovery effort can be initiated. If none are found, reintroduction from other watersheds further to the north may be considered.

"In either case, our effort is ultimately intended to be the first step of bringing back this important species to the Klamath River," Belchik said.

Yurok Tribal Court starting Yurok elders service

Kim Yost

Yurok Elder Services Program Coordinator

Greeting from the newly established Yurok Elders Service Program (YESP), located within the Yurok Tribal Court. My name is Kim Yost, YESP Coordinator. I will be implementing the services that intend to meet the needs of our elders.

Over the past couple years a survey was conducted in order to identify significant needs for support for Yurok elders aged 50 and over in the service areas of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

The Yurok Tribal Court will continue gathering information as part an on-going process to get elder input and information.

The following is a list of services that I will help coordinate with you:

- Transportation
- Community Events
- Meals
- Legal Aid
- Veteran Services
- Home Visit Outreach
- Cultural Foods and Resources
- "Individual Elder Plans" (IEP) – person centered planning, designed to meet a full range is services that elders may need.

I will be working within our Tribal Programs and within the greater community to identify and secure resources to meet the identified needs of our most valuable population.

It is our responsibility to watch over our most fragile population of people, our elders.

Tribe opens up access to much needed rock

The quarries will save money and stop erosion into the Klamath River



Yurok Road Maintenance Foreman, David Frye, stands on Iron Gate Road before the crew went to work.

The Yurok Tribal Road Department is restoring two roads that will massively maximize the department's ability to better travel ways on the Reservation.

Both the Two Snakes Road and Iron Gate Road lead to substantial storages of rock that can be used to fortify dirt roads for winter travel and limit bad sediment from entering the Klamath River and its tributaries.

"The purpose of opening these quarries is to stretch our road dollars," said David Frye, the Yurok Tribe's Road Maintenance Foreman. "Now we can rock twice as much road for half the price. Rock on."

Previously, the Tribe had to purchase rock that was shipped in from out of the area.

Iron Gate Road is located off of Pine Creek Road and Two Snakes is just past Tulley Creek. Both three-mile roads



This is the road after the work was completed.

were in "horrendous condition" before the Road's crew went to work, according to Frye. Some portions of Iron Gate road were difficult to walk through, let alone traverse in a four-wheel drive truck.

All that is left to finish up the roads is rockwork and brushing, the latter will be completed by the Yurok Forestry Department. The brushing will act as a fire break in the event of a forest blaze.

In addition to benefiting tribal roads for years to come, Two Snakes and Iron Gate both have substantial hunting, wood cutting and gathering grounds. The roads are lined with tanoaks, firs, huckleberry bushes and mushrooms.

"We opened up some really good gathering areas. There's a ton of acorns right now," Frye said.

The Road Maintenance crew worked with Bob Blanchard

from the Yurok Forestry Department to land the competitive Natural Resources Conservation Service grant run through the USDA. The grant—\$246,000 a year for five years—is for fixing existing roads that are eroding mud into the Klamath River and its tributaries. This is the first time Tribes have had access to the grant.

The relatively new, all-Yurok road maintenance specialists vary in experience and are learning a lot working on this project, said Frye, who is a retired Trinity County road maintenance supervisor. The crew is also setting the standard for roads on the Yurok Reservation. There are dozens of roads in a similar condition to what Iron Gate and Two Snakes were before the crew went to work.

“This is a great opportunity for the new Road Department to put into practice these new skills, to set the standard high,” Frye said. “We were real fortunate we came across this grant.”

Place your AD here

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Yurok tribal member, Jordan Carlson, holds a king bolete she harvested this fall.

Fall fungi popping

Mushrooms are another abundant, healthy, traditional fall food source in Yurok territory.

Chanterelles, hedgehogs, king boletes and tanoaks are just a few of the abundant autumn fungi that can be found from Wehl-kwew to O sley-goych, from the Little River to Wilson Creek.

Yuroks have gathered mushrooms for food since the beginning of time. Collecting mushrooms takes a knowledge that is best learned from elders who know how to distinguish between edible and toxic fungi.

“I learned from my elders,” said Chris Peters, a Yurok hunter and gatherer.

The most common edible mushrooms rise in succession following the first rain. Chanterelles pop first on the coast and then migrate to the mountains as the rains become more frequent. Chanterelles can be identified by gills located under the cap and its stem,

which is white inside but stains yellow after it is cut. The gills look like raised, interlacing veins.

The orange hued, trumpet-shaped fungal flowers are followed by hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are apricot on top and have fine white “teeth” on the underside. These earthy-tasting mushrooms are probably the safest to harvest for the beginning gatherer because there aren’t any toxic look-alikes. Both mushrooms can be found in forests mixed with fir and spruce. Hedgehogs particularly like to hang with huckleberries.

After hedgehogs come king boletes, which are one of the largest edible mushrooms. The sometimes knee-high fungi have a dense bulbous stem and a tan cap. Instead of gills, kings have a spongy looking underside. King boletes are usually located in conifer forests.

However, unlike hedgehogs and

chanterelles, these kings of the forest floor are susceptible to bugs particularly maggots. Some gatherers like the big boletes so much they will pluck the maggots before cooking and eating the delicious mushrooms.

When the fall mornings begin to chill down it is time to look for tanoaks, which only grow in the mountains. Tanoaks, a favorite among many Yurok people, can be found in tanoak groves as their name suggests, but they also grow under conifers and rhododendrons. Typically, there will be a good push of tanoaks after the “grandmas” or coral fungi start making an annual presence in the woods. The Yurok word for tanoak mushroom is kerm-serhl. Tanoaks are white with brownish stains on top of the caps. The fungus is most easily distinguished by its smell, which is similar to cinnamon.

“It’s got a distinctive aroma. It’s a sweet and spicy smell,” Peters said.

The methods of harvesting different types of mushrooms can greatly influence the abundance of the resource.

Chanterelles and hedgehogs should be snipped with scissors or a knife. Harvesting this way will ensure that more of the delectable fungi are abundant in perpetuity. It helps to bring a paint brush when picking to clean the fungi as they are collected. It’s a lot easier than cleaning dozens of mushrooms at a time. Boletes should also be cut to leave the fungi’s spores in the ground.

Tanoaks are most sustainably harvested by gently pulling them from the ground, while disturbing the duff and soil as little as possible.

“If you disturb the beds it ruins them,” Peters said.

Wild mushrooms are a good source of protein and contain very few carbohydrates. They also contain vitamin A, B vitamins and vitamin D. Gathering mushrooms is also a good way to keep in shape as it takes a lot walking on steep slopes to find substantial quantities.

The number of ways mushrooms can be prepared is infinite. They can be used in spaghetti sauce, stuffing, sautéed with garlic, put in soups, gravies etc.

This article should be not be used to identify mushrooms and always remember the first rule of mushroom gathering: when in doubt throw it out.

Tribe looking for the following members

If your name is on the list below please contact the Tribe’s Enrollment office at (707) 482-1350. If someone you know is on the list please contact them and inform him or her to do the same. Numerous efforts have been made to contact these tribal members.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abbott, Benjamin Michael George | Honeycutt Lewis, Nora Jean |
| Abbott, Monika Dawn | Mahach, James Andrew |
| Albers, Donna Marie | Frank |
| Alvarado, Diane M. | Masten, Pamela Kay |
| Aubrey, Enrico Valentino | Masten, Robert |
| Aubrey, Tesha Fawn | Moon-Batt, Arnez Agnes |
| Bailey, Stanley J | Myers, Ronald Lee |
| Beebe, Deborah Lynn | Norris-Robinson, Letha |
| Childs, William Alexander | Pogue, Buddy Dwane |
| Cruz, Alena Irene | Raymond, Teo Larue |
| Cruz, Jose Francis | Reed, Gloria Lynn |
| Cude, Shantel | Robinson, Kenneth Vernon, III |
| Day, Robert Richard Lee | Rodriguez, Shalla Angela |
| Dewey, Michelle Evon | Rollings, Roney Ray |
| Frank, William Barney, Jr. | Shreve, Daryl Paul |
| Garcia, Tehauna Souix | Smith, Vickie Lynn |
| Gentry, Darin Edwin | Starritt, Waymond Earl |
| George, Laura Elaine | Stimac, Nicole Wells |
| Green, James Maxwell | Swain, Johnny |
| Hannon, Jeremiah Allen Dale | Tafoya, Aaron Anthony |
| Harris, Penelope Sue | Taggart, Sarah Anne |
| Henderson, Edward Steven | Tennison, Lorette Elizabeth |
| Hodge, James C-ERI | Trippo, Vernon Raymond, Jr. |
| Huffman, Leanne Mae | Ward, Delmar Francis |
| Jeffrey, Shelley Jean | Willis, Carroll, Jr. |
| Keisner, Delmar Malin, Jr. | Wilson, Robert Darrell |
| Keisner, Frederick Allen | |
| Kindrick, Katherine | |

Yurok volunteers build wash house in Wautec

Building Healthy Communities helps fund project

The Building Healthy Communities initiative has begun work on the Yurok Reservation which is included in the Del Norte and Adjacent Tribal lands Community, identified by The California Endowment as potential model for a successful rural community.

In collaboration with the Yurok Tribe, the Endowment's Building Healthy Communities initiative funded a wash house in Wautec — the first project on the Reservation.

With the closure of the laundromat in Hoopa, Wautec families are forced to take a four-hour round trip to Eureka just to wash clothes. Wautec lacks grid-based power and it is extremely cost ineffective to run washers and dryers off of small generators or solar systems. The project had already been started, but stalled for lack of funds.

"This wash house will make a huge difference and it also represents something bigger," said Frankie Myers, a Yurok tribal member and volunteer. "The Building Healthy Communities community-based approach is unique from other granting agencies. There is potential for tribal members and the initiative to make some meaningful, lasting changes on the Reservation."

Yurok volunteers have already poured the foundation and built the structure which will contain three washers and two dryers. All that is left is power, which will come from the Wautec Fire Station.

"This is how we did it in the old days. If someone needed a house, the whole community came together to build it," said Richard Myers, who is also a Yurok Councilmember. "I want my community to be able to accomplish its goals without first asking for help from the tribal government or the BIA or anyone else."

Del Norte County and the adjacent tribal lands were picked to participate in the initiative along with 13 other communities across the state not only because the need to improve health is great, but because the potential for success is even better. The Yurok Tribe has proven it can make mountainous change with minimal resources. The Endowment will be investing approximately \$10 million



Yurok youth volunteers help with another Building Healthy Communities project near Crescent City.

dollars in Del Norte County and bordering tribal lands over the next 10 years. The Building Healthy Communities staff completed over 1,000 surveys and facilitated hundreds of community meetings over the past year. It is poised to take action based on the research in an effort to measurably improve health outcomes, especially for children and youth.

What made the Wautec project appealing to Building Healthy Communities was the fact that the community was already working together to make it happen and it is tied to strategies identified in its plan for work in the first two years of the initiative. The strategies, involving improving neighborhood environments and supporting improved health outcomes for children and youth, aim to grow the community's ability to create positive change and increase overall health.

"The purpose of this grant was to help build capacity in the Wautec community," said Laura Olson, California Endowment Building Healthy Communities Program Manager for Del Norte County and Adjacent Tribal Lands. "Small grants like this one are meant to be stepping stones to support people working together to make small positive changes in their own communities and that builds empowerment to taking on bigger and tougher

challenges over time.”

Yurok tribal members, living on the upper Reservation are also involved in another of the initiative’s programs, a Youth leadership project through the Yurok Wellness Court. The function of the project is to advance leadership and advocacy skills among teens. The nearly half dozen youth are working on a campaign to stop the misuse and abuse of whippets on the Reservation. Whippets are small nitrous oxide-filled canisters that can be used to make whip cream, but can also be inhaled to get high.

The teen team’s goal is to raise awareness of the dilemma in the community and come up with a solution to address it. The effort is tied to another strategy of the initiative, which is drug use prevention. The crew has already made a public presentation to inform the community of the problem. They are making educational materials to teach their peers the perils of whippets. Also as part of the solution, the teens are working on a plan to ask the Yurok Tribal Council to pass an ordinance that puts an age limit on those who can possess the potentially lethal gas.

“We want youth to engage youth in the Building Healthy Communities initiative by actually having them help start to build a healthy community today,” said Geneva Wiki, Yurok Tribal member who is the Executive Director for the Wild Rivers Community Foundation, which is facilitating the initiative.

If tribal members would like to participate in the initiative, be on the lookout for newspaper and radio announcements about upcoming meetings.

Visit www.calendow.org or call (707) 465-1238 to receive information about upcoming events.



(left) Julian Delillo, Riahanna Ray and Keeya Wiki pose for a picture at the Yurok Tribal Head Start, Early Head Start and Childcare grand opening.

Tribe has grand opening for new Education building

The Yurok Tribe recently held a grand opening ceremony for a new building at the Margaret Keating School in Klamath to house its Head Start, Early Head Start and Childcare Programs.

“The new location is a one-stop opportunity for families to have their children at one site, whether they have kids in Childcare, Head Start or K-5,” said Education Director Jim McQuillen. “The new facility represents the Yurok Tribal Council’s dedication to future of the community. The Council wants the best for the children.”

The new facility doubles the capacity of the old building and accommodates more than 50 children of tribal and non-tribal families. There are four classrooms, which all bare the names of Yurok villages. The nearly 6,000 square-foot building also boasts a commercial kitchen designed to satisfy the children’s nutritional needs and a full play area.

In addition to standard early childhood education, the Yurok Head Start and Early Head Start offer a Yurok language immersion class, which is a critical part of the Tribe’s goal of bringing back fluency.



Yurok Planner, Sophia Lay and Education Director, Jim McQuillen address tribal council members, school district officials and parents at the grand opening.

The Early Head Start program provides services to parents with children 0 to 3 years. Children ages 3 to 5 are able to attend Head Start.

The new site is being leased from the Del Norte County Unified School District. The \$1.4 million project was funded by a Community Development Block, the Yurok Tribal Council, federal Childcare grants and the Humboldt Area Foundation.

"It was truly a collaborative effort to make this dream a reality, McQuillen said.

"This has been a long time coming," echoed Jan Moorehouse, the Del Norte Unified School District's Superintendent. "I applaud everyone who put in years of hard work to make this happen."



Yurok Tribal Member Michael Riecke graduated from Air Force Base Military Training at Lackland AFB in Texas. Michael's parents and grandmother travelled to Texas for the graduation ceremonies. Michael graduated with 750 other Airmen from 8 and ½ weeks of training. There were three to four thousand family and friends in attendance. Michael ranked in the top 10% of his flight class.

He received a ribbon for that achievement as well as a ribbon from graduating Basic Military Training and a National Defense medal.

He was sent to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey to study Chinese for a year and a half. He will be a Ground Linguist.

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Yurok business finishes first year



Yurok tribal member Victor Knight stands on his top-of-the-line water truck.

Victor Knight knows something about tenacity. The barrel-chested, soft-spoken Yurok man is co-owner of V and P Services Inc., a fledgling construction business based in Weitchpec, CA. This November, Knight and the other half of V and P, Pete Leavitt, celebrated their first year of business.

In the rural construction business, flexibility is key and that attribute is the heart of the V and P's business model.

"Rural construction companies have to be versatile. You can't just do one thing. You have to do three or four, especially in today's economy" Knight said.

Knight and Leavitt's first piece of equipment is a symbol of this philosophy. It's a top-of-the-line water truck that is able to perform a number of tasks. The vehicle is equipped with a 4,000 gallon water tank and pump capable of siphoning water from a creek. The Kenworth truck has nozzles that can shoot water 360 degrees around the vehicle for fighting wild land and house fires. It is also perfect for refilling fire trucks fighting forest fires, which is why V and P sought and secured a three-year contract with the U.S. Forest Service to tend water for the wild land fire crews all over the United States.

"There were almost no fires this year," Knight said. Instead of aiding in fire suppression efforts, V and P gained contracts from Mercer Fraser Company, Kernan Construction and the Yurok Tribe for providing water for road construction projects.

"I am very proud to own a Yurok business that works for the



The water truck is perfect for aiding wild land fire crews and road building.

Tribe," Knight said.

Operating in a rural area has its drawbacks and benefits. Reliable internet is limited as well as immediate access to simple things like office supplies.

"I can't just go down to Kinko's," Knight explained.

It is also difficult to meet with potential clients in person.

"I'm a face-to-face kind of person. I want to sit down with my customers and talk about their project," Knight said.

On the upside, mega-construction companies don't typically want jobs in lesser populated areas because there is not enough volume as far as work goes.

"That cuts down on competition a little bit," Knight said.

In the future V and P want to purchase more specialized equipment to do unique work like cleaning up Super Fund sites and drilling pilings for road construction.

While starting and running a successful business has been very satisfying for Knight, it has also been extremely difficult. He has to do the paper work and the physical work.

"What I learned is you have to keep clawing forward. It's worth it in the end," Knight said. "And finish school."

Yurok Business Spotlight 

Yurok Today features one Yurok business in each edition. Please contact Matt Mais at (707) 482-1350 to participate.



Yurok Tribe

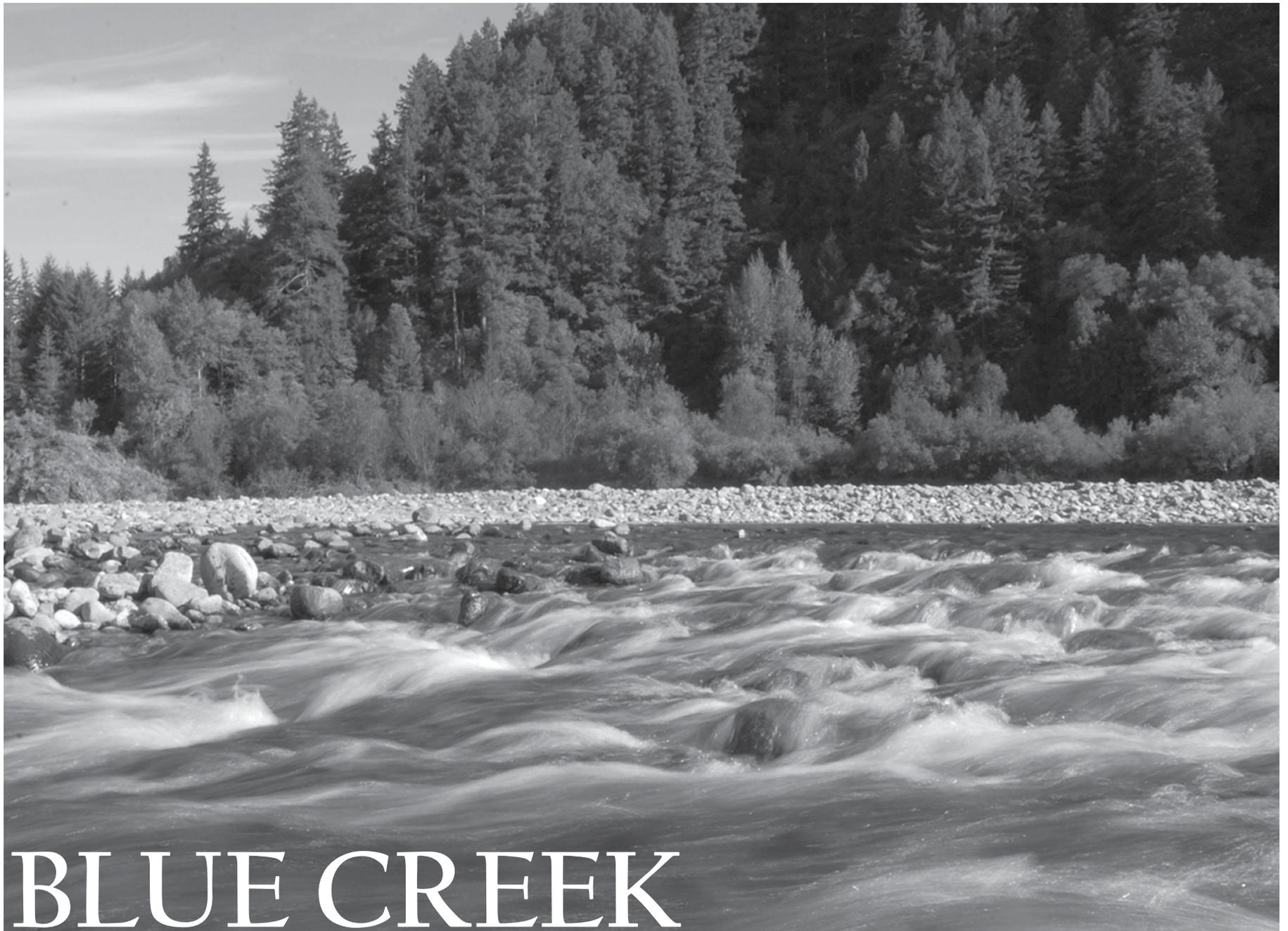
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