
HOPLAND BAND OF POMO INDIANS



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| Project Title: | Improving the Capability of an Indian Tribal Government to Regulate Environmental Quality |
| Award Amount: | \$248,947 |
| Type of Grant: | Environmental |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Tribe |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 4 Native American consultants hired
- 30 elders involved
- 20 youth involved
- \$7,578 in resources leveraged
- 35 individuals trained
- 26 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians is a 742-member federally recognized tribe. The 2,070 acre Hopland Reservation is located in Mendocino County, 26 miles south of Ukiah. The developed area of the reservation exists in a small valley, and has about 500 acres of vineyards and homes; the rest of the land consists of steeper, uninhabited, upland watershed.

In recent years, the tribe has taken many steps towards establishing a comprehensive and enforceable environmental regulatory program. It has drafted and adopted eight environmental codes and ordinances for the reservation, developed an implementation

plan for the program, and obtained funding for staff compliance assistance training.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to improve the tribal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) capacity to analyze the impact of future land development projects on the reservation's environment. The EPA team proposed to conduct environmental inventories and geographical information systems (GIS) mapping on reservation plant life, wildlife, and threats to the environment, and to develop an environmental review process involving tribal departments.

The first objective was to collect and catalog information that could be used to monitor environmental change caused by land management activity. The project team, including three wildlife biologists and a botanist, conducted plant and animal inventories for three years, benthic macro-invertebrate surveys for two years, and vegetation and habitat mapping for one year. By the end of the project, the team produced detailed species lists for wildlife and benthic macro-invertebrates, a photographic guide to mammals, a plant herbarium with 950 plants, and comprehensive wildlife and

botanical resources reports. As part of this objective, project members trained three tribal members to take part in data collection and environmental monitoring activities, and created a curriculum, in the form of eight modified Master Naturalist workshops, to educate 32 tribal members on reservation ecology. Workshop topics were water, forestry, wildlife, plants, and geology of the reservation, communications, and energy. In the popular plants workshop, the instructor integrated Pomo legends and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into the lesson. Tribal employees were encouraged to go to the workshops, and each workshop had 12-25 attendees. Participants also included 20 tribal youth and members from eight other local tribes.

Objective two was to create maps to identify sensitive areas, showing vegetation patterns, sensitive vegetation and wildlife areas, and illegal solid waste dumpsite areas. Project staff used both aerial photography and on-the-ground field mapping. Wildlife mapping, particularly for birds, was carried out by keying wildlife to the vegetation types in which they commonly reside. Preliminary maps of vegetation and wildlife habitat types were prepared and field checked, and then entered into the GIS system. The team also collected GPS data on 17 illegal solid waste dump sites, and produced GIS maps of waste dump sites.

The third objective was to establish a system through which development projects could be assessed for their environmental impact. The project director studied the impact assessment and permitting processes of other tribes, states, and the federal government, and wrote a draft impact assessment and permitting process for the Hopland Band. This draft was reviewed by

a tribal EPA committee comprised of staff from other tribal departments and a Tribal Council member. After receiving feedback, he made appropriate changes and submitted the proposed system to the Tribal Council for approval.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

“In 10 years,” stated Allen Cooperrider, the Tribal EPA Director, “people will still appreciate what we’ve done in creating this inventory. We have as good an inventory as any reservation in the country now.” He added, “With the inventories done, plant and animal species mapped, and a review process in place, the tribe will be better able to analyze and assess the impact of future development projects, whether they are for business, residential, recreational, or other purposes.”

The inventories and mapping have given the tribe baseline data on the plants, wildlife, and ecology of the reservation. The new environmental review process provides the tribe with a framework to study the impact of proposed development projects. The environmental curriculum provided an educational opportunity for 32 tribal members, who gained a new understanding of reservation ecology and were empowered to consider the importance of maintaining and sustaining wildlife and plant habitats.

Project staff stated the project has enhanced the tribe’s ability to realize its environmental goals: preventing land, air, and water pollution; restoring and protecting fish and wildlife habitat; ensuring the survival of native plants; motivating tribal members to recycle and take an active role in protecting the environment; and preserving tribal culture and seasonal connections to the land.

REDWOOD VALLEY LITTLE RIVER BAND OF POMO INDIANS



Project Title: Home Maintenance and Individual Money Management Education Project

Award Amount: \$95,182

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010

Grantee Type: Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 10 elders involved
- 22 youth involved
- \$10,810 in resources leveraged
- 75 individuals trained
- 3 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Redwood Valley Little River Band of Pomo Indians is located on the 197-acre Redwood Valley Rancheria in Mendocino County, California. The band has 170 members, 60 percent of whom are under the age of 18. Of the tribe's 55 heads of household, 40 percent are unemployed.

In 2008, 15 rental housing units on the reservation were converted to home ownership units. A 2009 inspection demonstrated that all of these housing units needed major repairs or replacement of plumbing, windows, carpet, or paint. A 2009 survey conducted by the tribe showed that tribal members were interested in developing home maintenance skills to

maintain their homes more effectively. Another 2009 tribal survey indicated tribal members wanted to develop self-sufficiency skills in financial management.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In response to the aforementioned needs assessment, tribal planners designed a project to develop home maintenance skills in tribal homeowners and build financial management skills in tribal youth, hoping to enhance economic self-sufficiency and personal responsibility for both groups.

The project's first objective was to develop and implement a home maintenance training program, providing training to a minimum of 10 families, with each family completing 80 percent of a home maintenance curriculum. To accomplish this, project staff recruited participants and worked with a local nonprofit organization and a regional Native American housing authority to develop 11 hands-on home maintenance workshops. The theme of the first five workshops, hosted by the nonprofit Solar Living Institute, was "Do-It-Yourself," with hands-on activities in carpentry, home maintenance and repair, plumbing, solar water heating, and electricity. After the first

workshop, participants began working together as a team, using newly learned skills to go from one participant's house to another, making repairs and performing basic maintenance.

After finishing the first series of workshops, participants attended six "Nuts and Bolts Repair Sessions" hosted by the Northern Circle Indian Housing Authority. These sessions included lessons on previous topics such as drywall repair, electricity, and plumbing, and new lessons on window screen installation, weatherization, home maintenance, and pest control. After each lesson, participants continued to use what they learned to help each other out. "If someone's house needed fixing," stated Barbara Graumann, the project director, "the team would come to the house and help with the work." The workshops were very popular with a core group of 10 to 12 participants, and 59 tribal members, including several youth, participated in at least one session. Beyond these workshops, project staff also provided counseling to five community members to assist them in preparing to purchase their own homes.

The second objective was to educate tribal youth in personal financial management, providing 15 youth, ages 13 to 23, with at least 16 hours of financial management training, assisting them in developing individual financial plans, and helping them to open checking or savings accounts. To accomplish this objective, the project director formed a partnership with the Mendocino Savings Bank, recruited youth participants, and worked with bank staff to set up eight workshops. The workshops, facilitated by bank staff members, followed two curricula: the FDIC's Money Smart curriculum for high school students and young adults, and the Junior Academy curriculum for middle school students. Modules included practical lessons on

banking, opening and using checking accounts, saving money and setting financial goals, understanding borrowing and credit, and paying for college, cars, and homes. In almost all of the workshops, youth took part in simulated exercises, using virtual dollars and virtual credit cards to learn the cost of goods and services, the pitfalls of not using money and credit wisely, and various ways money and financial resources can be used to reach personal and financial goals. Sixteen youth participated, with an average of 12 youth attending each workshop. All 16 youth took part in a tour of the bank, learning the responsibilities of staff members and how the bank was run. Upon completing the training, each received a \$50 bond with which to open a bank account.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Fifty-nine home maintenance workshop participants, especially the 10 to 12 participants in the core group, reported an increase in their knowledge of home repair and maintenance, gaining new confidence and competence in cost-effectively taking care of their homes. According to the project director, "Now they can assess what is wrong, or isn't wrong, with their houses, and if they can't repair a problem, they know where to go to get it fixed. They can solve problems and understand causes."

Sixteen youth participants broadened their knowledge of financial management, learned how to avoid problems associated with credit and debt, developed personal financial goals, and gained a better understanding of the financial and economic challenges confronted by their parents and grandparents. Barbara Graumann stated, "The lessons they have learned will enable them to better understand and deal with the challenges they will face as adults. These workshops have prepared them to make better, more responsible financial and personal choices."

SMITH RIVER RANCHERIA



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| Project Title: | Establishment of Nuu-da'-ye'- A Native American Foster Care Network |
| Award Amount: | \$118,331 |
| Type of Grant: | Social and Economic Development Strategies |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2009 – Dec. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Tribe |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 5 elders involved
- \$5,322 in resources leveraged
- 5 individuals trained
- 9 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Smith River Rancheria, with 965 enrolled members, is located on the Pacific coast of northwestern California, extending into southwestern Oregon. The Rancheria's Community and Family Services (CFS) Department provides child welfare and prevention services, family and elder assistance, community and family outreach, and educational assistance for tribal members. Prior to this project, CFS staff members assessed the availability and effectiveness of foster care for Native American youth in the three-county region surrounding the Rancheria. They learned that although there were 111 Native American foster care children in the area,

there were only six Native American foster homes providing culturally-appropriate care.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to develop a process by which the tribe could improve access to quality culturally and socially appropriate foster care for Native American children in the tribe's service area - Del Norte and Humboldt Counties, California, and Curry County, Oregon.

The project's first objective was to develop and gain Tribal Council approval of a plan creating home licensing and certification standards promoting safe, culturally and socially appropriate environments for Native American children. Early in the project, the team faced a significant challenge: a three-month delay in hiring key staff members integral to implementing project activities. Significantly behind schedule, the team held its initial strategic planning meeting with the Del Norte County Health and Human Services (DNHHS) licensing department one quarter of the way through the project period. The team quickly worked to establish a foster care network including

DNHHS, the social service departments of Humboldt and Curry counties and the Yurok Tribe, College of the Redwoods staff, and local youth advocacy groups. Working with these partners, the project's social worker trained to become a certified foster and kinship trainer. Next, she reviewed county HHS licensing and certification standards, reviewed foster care program management best practices, adapted county forms for eventual use in the CFS foster care program, and began to devise a set of standards for the program. The draft CFS Tribal Foster Home License Standards included definitions of key terms, a description of the legal authority of the CFS to issue or cancel foster care licenses, licensing and training requirements for tribal foster parents, and physical standards for tribal foster homes. In July 2010, the project team presented the draft standards to the tribe's Indian Child Welfare Committee (ICWC) for initial review. In late August, after making revisions to ensure the new standards addressed ICWC questions and met community needs, the team presented a final draft to the Tribal Council for approval.

The second objective was to develop an approved Native American foster parent training curriculum and recruitment plan. To develop the curriculum, the project team, along with College of the Redwoods staff, reviewed the foster care certification curricula of local counties. Then, the team collaborated with local Indian child welfare advocates and staff from other tribes to develop a culturally-appropriate framework. The framework, created for a 30-hour Native American foster parent training course, included sessions on legal issues, expectations of foster parents, the impact of historical trauma on native families, culture as a healer and protector, self-care and wellness, parenting children of trauma, creating positive relationships, and drug and alcohol exposure. While creating the

curriculum, the project team worked concurrently on a foster home recruitment plan. To create this plan, they held public meetings in the three county service area to educate the public about the project, elicit feedback, and assess community interest in the project. At the tribe's annual meeting, members completed surveys to assess areas of concern relating to youth, and many members showed interest in becoming foster parents. From information gathered, the team created a recruitment plan using partner referrals, continued meetings, extended family placements, and community outreach to identify new foster families. Due to the initial delay, neither the curriculum nor the final recruitment plan was completed by the end of the funding period. In response, the team requested and received a three-month no-cost extension, and completed the curriculum and recruitment plan by the end of the period.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The project team successfully produced a set of foster parent licensing and certification guidelines, a tribal foster home recruitment plan, and a curriculum for certifying culturally-capable Native American foster parents. Utilizing partnerships created during the project period, the team participated in several workshops that enhanced CFS' capacity to manage a tribal foster care program. These partnerships have increased CFS' visibility in the social services community, resulting in frequent requests for CFS assistance in home placement for native youth. Project staff also has reached out to the Smith River Rancheria community, inviting members to consider becoming foster parents, and five families already have agreed to be put on a waiting list to participate. With the elements of a program in place, CFS is well-positioned to protect the physical health, safety, and well-being of foster children in the community.

SUSCOL COUNCIL



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| Project Title: | Design-Training for Suscol House |
| Award Amount: | \$88,553 |
| Type of Grant: | Social and Economic Development Strategies |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Native Nonprofit |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 4 elders involved
- \$63,281 in resources leveraged
- 9 partnerships formed
- 9 Native American consultants hired
- 51 people trained

BACKGROUND

Suscol Council is a native nonprofit with a mission to develop a Native American Healing and Cultural Center in the Chiles-Pope Valley located in the northeastern part of Napa County, California. Suscol Council plans for the center, or Suscol House, to be a sustainable, environmentally friendly open space whose 2,000 square foot structure will be used for educational projects as well as preserving and protecting Native American sacred sites and traditions.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to complete the design and planning phase of the Suscol House. This was accomplished through two objectives over a two-year period.

The first objective was to complete the design work and receive the required permits from Napa County to develop the center. During the first year and a half of the project period, the project director worked with structural, septic, and solar design engineers, as well as an architect, to design the site plan for the center. While waiting for the permits and design, project staff identified partners to provide funding and help train volunteers to develop the site. Partners included the California Straw Bale Builders Association, the Hoopa Tribal Civilian Community Corps (TCCC), Ukiah California Indian Manpower Consortium (CIMC), and Habitat for Humanity. By the end of the first project period, the project staff completed the design work and in December, 2009, Suscol Council received the permits to begin the building at the site.

The second objective was to train four Native Americans in straw building techniques. Straw bale construction is a building method that uses bales of straw as a structural element and for building insulation. During the first year of the project, 19 volunteers from TCCC worked on the site, learning about earth plasters, straw bale construction, and wild lands

management. One small prototype was completed to serve as a training model and to test how the local soil would work as an earth plaster.

The second year of the project involved additional development of prototypes at the site and more volunteer activity. Four Native American interns were selected to work at the site. Over a four-month period, nine interns worked, but only one stayed on for the entire training period. The project coordinator taught the interns how to create structural stability with two different types of earth plaster: pure cob walls and straw bale walls covered with cob plasters. Cob is a mixture of mud, sand, and straw. The interns and project coordinator built three prototype training structures. The project staff designed the project to be a community built and designed site. In addition to the interns, members of the community, including elders and youth were trained in building techniques and other environmentally sustainable activities, such as permaculture. Over the course of the project period, project staff documented 2,437 volunteer hours through the TCCC, CIMC, interns, and community members.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The four test sites built with straw bale are located in the hills surrounding Napa Valley. The test sites are circular and constructed using environmentally sustainable materials, such as straw bale, and green building techniques. Suscol Council is designing the site to be a safe place where Native Americans can come to strengthen their cultural identity and work on issues of generational grief.

This project is the first phase of the long-term mission of the Suscol Council: to build a cultural center. The project director hopes this project will serve as a model for other

communities to create their own cultural preservation projects.

“The two prototypes that were built gave interns lots of varied experience from foundation to end phase of finished interior and exterior plaster walls and floors.”

Charlie Toledo, Project Director

TRIBAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SOLUTIONS AGENCY, INC. (TESSA)



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|------------------------|--|
| Project Title: | Foster Care Enhancement Project |
| Award Amount: | \$502,637 |
| Type of Grant: | Social and Economic Development Strategies |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Native Nonprofit |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 8 jobs created
- 9 elders involved
- 61 youth involved
- 37 individuals trained
- \$66,450 in resources leveraged
- 9 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

Tribal Economic and Social Solutions Agency, Inc. (TESSA) is a native nonprofit organization founded in 2005 to provide social and economic services to tribes and urban American Indians and Alaska Natives residing in northern California. As the only licensed Indian Foster Family Agency for American Indian/Alaska Native families in the area, TESSA also has a strong advocate role for implementation of the Indian Child and Welfare Act (ICWA) in California.

In the 1960s and 1970s, American Indian children were about six times more likely to be placed in foster care than other children and many of these children were placed in non-native homes. Congress enacted ICWA in 1978 to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and

security of Indian families. ICWA requires that tribes be notified and given an opportunity to intervene when the state places a child subject to ICWA in foster care or seeks to terminate parental rights on behalf of the child. ICWA also requires that children should be placed with relatives or tribal families if possible.

Children in foster care are disproportionately affected by a range of developmental challenges, including: chronic health problems, developmental delays, educational difficulties that warrant special education intervention, mild to moderate health problems, and in some cases, severe psychological and behavioral difficulties. To address these developmental challenges and provide care for foster children, foster families often require significant social service support.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project purpose was to improve the capacity of the foster care community by developing specific therapeutic training activities focused on strengthening the skills of Native American foster parents, ICWA Coordinators, and native foster children, and to provide support services to biological parents.

The first objective of the project was to provide intensive training to 20 foster parents and three ICWA Coordinators on caring for foster children. The ICWA Coordinators were invited to be part of the foster parent training so that they could better understand the issues faced by foster parents and the skills needed to provide effective placement of children. By the end of the project period, 10 foster parents completed all the trainings and two ICWA coordinators were involved in training activities.

The second objective of the project was to strengthen 20 foster children's resiliency to overcome the obstacles created by abuse and removal from their biological family and to show a 20 percent improvement in adherence to household rules. By the end of the project period, 17 youth completed all the training modules and 90 percent of the 20 foster children remained in their original foster placement home. The project staff believes the stability of placement was due to better adherence to household rules.

The training for the foster parents, ICWA Coordinators, and foster children was accomplished through 10 training modules. In keeping with ICWA's goal to involve American Indian and Alaska Native foster children with their identified culture, seven of the training modules incorporated Native American cultural events. A total of 16 foster parents and 45 foster and biological children attended the three-day Bear Dance and completed a training module on Developing Healthy Lifestyles by learning about and cooking traditional foods. Other modules included: parenting skills; health and culture workshop; teamwork; peer interaction; caring for children of trauma; the effects of substance abuse on the family; and healing trauma. In addition, during each year of the project, the foster children

prepared for the annual All My Relations conference, a conference for Indian families focused on cultural activities and sponsored by the National Indian Justice Center.

The final objective was to create five partnerships to deliver services to biological parents of the foster children. Project staff hoped that 10 biological parents would participate in activities and there would be a 10 percent increase in reunification of biological parents with their children. While the grantee partnered with the Sacramento Native American Health Center, the Mooretown Rancheria, and the Shingle Springs Rancheria Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, project staff was unable to fully involve biological parents in the therapeutic training activities. In turn, no biological parents working with TESSA were reunited legally with their children during the project period.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

This project, through the trainings and workshops, facilitated the formation of a community of foster parents that support each other. The project staff believes this network reduced the telephone calls from the foster parents to the TESSA social workers by 10 percent from the time of application submission to the end of the project period. Mary Curtis, the project director stated that "because of this project, the foster parents gained knowledge that fostering can be a fun and positive experience."

UKIAH HINTHEL COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, INC.



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| Project Title: | Yokayo Sedge Bed Restoration Project |
| Award Amount: | \$119,129 |
| Type of Grant: | Social and Economic Development Strategies |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2009 – Sept. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Nonprofit |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 5 jobs created
- 6 elders involved
- 12 youth involved
- \$84,247 in resources leveraged
- 5 individuals trained
- 3 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Yokayo Indian Community, a 120-member band of Pomo Indians located in the Ukiah Valley, formed Ukiah Hinthel Community and Cultural Development, Inc. (UHCCD), a nonprofit corporation, to fulfill the community's governmental functions. The mission of the UHCCD is "to develop and maintain the quality of life for Yokayo tribal members, support the sovereignty of tribal government, and preserve Yokayo history, culture, and language for future generations of Yokayo Pomo."

Since 1881, the Yokayo Indian Community has owned 119 acres of land, including 46 acres of agriculturally-zoned "bottomland." Historically, the bottomland has had an abundance of sedge grass, and the roots of this plant have been used in producing Pomo

baskets, considered to be among the most beautifully crafted baskets in the world. In the Yokayo community, basket making is still an important means of expression; this Pomo tradition is a source of strong cultural pride. In the 20 years prior to this project, however, community members did not use the bottomland for the harvest of sedge roots or for any other kind of agriculture, and the land had become overgrown with brush.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

UHCCD project planners proposed this project as a way to promote the cultural practice of Pomo basket making and provide an economic development opportunity for the community. The project's main purpose was to improve access to the two known sedge beds in the bottomland and to create a healthy growing environment for sedge plants in the bottomland. This would enable the community to harvest sedge roots for basket making and use proceeds from the sale of the roots to pay property taxes on community land.

The first objective was to repair the path leading to the sedge beds. To do this, the project director hired a restoration coordinator and five groundskeepers. After purchasing supplies and equipment for the

task, the crew began clearing an already-existing 1.5 mile path through the bottomland to the sedge beds. Though the crew found more brush and garbage than expected, they nonetheless managed to clear the path in four months.

The second objective was to clear debris and plants surrounding the sedge beds, to create a healthier growing environment for the sedge plants in the beds. This would enable the roots of the plants to grow longer and straighter, so that they would be more useful for basket making. To complete this objective, the crew cleared garbage, leaf litter, blackberry bushes, old grape vines, and various invasive species of plants. While clearing the land, the team located four unknown sedge beds and many other plants used in basket making, including willow, bulrush, and deer grass. In areas where the sedge grass grew too thick to facilitate healthy root growth, the team transplanted the superfluous sedge to other locations on the bottomland. Due to seasonal rains, much of the plant life removed during the project period grew back. This made the project team realize that clearing the land would be an arduous and ongoing process, taking significantly more time and effort than previously expected.

As the work progressed on the first two objectives, project staff held monthly community information meetings on the project and established a Restoration Committee, made up of community members interested in shaping the community's long-term sedge bed policy.

The third objective was to develop the long-term sedge bed policy, outlining the future processes by which the beds would be maintained and the sedge roots harvested, marketed, and sold. To complete this objective, the project director, with help from the UHCCD Board, Restoration

Committee, and community members, drafted a policy, held community review meetings, amended the draft twice, and produced a final product by the final month of the project period. The policy called for the continued removal of bottomland plants that compete with sedge, year-round sustainable harvesting of the roots, and selling the roots through the California Indian Basketweavers Association and other Native American basket weaving groups.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

According to project staff, the newly repaired path and uncluttered sedge beds have made sedge roots easier to access and harvest, particularly for seniors and less mobile members of the Yokayo Indian Community. Because the roots largely had been unattended in the decades prior to the project, however, they were not suitable yet for use in basket making. If the plants are tended and harvested properly in the coming years, the sedge roots will fetch an estimated \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year for the Yokayo Indian Community, according to project partners and consultants working on the project. Expert basket makers in the community estimate that the roots will be ready for harvest in two to three years.

At the end of the project period, the UHCCD received a one-year renewable grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the removal of noxious weeds from the bottomland. The grant will enable the project's groundskeepers to keep working, to continue removing plants that compete with sedge, and to ensure a healthy environment for growing sedge roots. UHCCD project staff believes they will be able to sustain the sedge beds beyond this grant period, providing raw materials for basket makers in the community and for other Native American basket weaving groups well into the future.

YUROK TRIBE



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| Project Title: | Enhancing Environmental Protection and Yurok Sovereignty |
| Award Amount: | \$370,098 |
| Type of Grant: | Environmental |
| Project Period: | Sept. 2007 – Mar. 2010 |
| Grantee Type: | Tribe |

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 50 elders involved
- 26 youth involved
- \$19,611 in resources leveraged
- 3 individuals trained
- 13 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Yurok Tribe, California’s largest tribe, has nearly 5,000 members, about half of whom reside on the 63,000 acre Yurok Indian Reservation (YIR). The tribe faces many challenges protecting the environment on the reservation. First, the tribe and tribal members own less than 30 percent of reservation land, making it difficult to regulate the activities of individuals and corporations. Additionally, according to staff members from the Yurok Tribal Environmental Program (YTEP), there has been a lack of strong baseline data on the extent and types of environmental pollution, forcing tribal leaders to rely sometimes on anecdotal evidence when making decisions on environmental matters. Over the long-

term, YTEP staff believe that failure to overcome these challenges could pose threats to the environment and public health, and affect the safety and quality of cultural and subsistence resources on the reservation.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project’s purpose was for the tribe to acquire more information on threats to environmental and public health, and improve the tribe’s capacity to identify and address environmental problems on the reservation. The first phase of the project, occurring in year one, was to compile data on potential and known point source locations of contaminants and toxins, and to enhance YTEP staff capacity through training in geographical information systems (GIS). To accomplish this, project staff conducted interviews with tribal members, tribal staff, and reservation community members, utilized a team of local high school students to conduct academic and Internet research; and consulted with surrounding agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. National Park Service, and Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health. Through this

process, the YTEP team identified 329 possible cases of environmental pollution on the YIR. Most of these were derived from interviews with local community members, who placed coded pieces of “sticky tape” on a master map, enabling the project team to view the approximate locations of specific environmental pollutants. Data gathered included: locations of illegal dumpsites, sites affected by herbicide spraying, old mills and mines, burned homes, faulty septic systems, abandoned autos, previously cleaned dumpsites, and other types of pollution sources. All potential pollution source data was mapped and compiled in YTEP’s GIS system, and also stored in YEDSS, YTEP’s secure and searchable computer database.

In addition to gathering pollution source information, three project staff members completed introductory GIS training and over 50 hours each of web-based GIS training. This training enhanced staff capacity in spatial analysis, enabling staff to better implement later phases of the project.

Phase two of the project, in year two, was to field-truth potential point source pollution sites, pinpoint the locations of nonpoint sediment contamination on the reservation, and inform the community on environmental health risks and ways to prevent potential health hazards. The project team began this phase by carefully studying the 329 potential sites, finding that only 218 were within YIR boundaries. Next, with help from tribal police and other tribal agencies, the team developed a detailed field survey strategy to account for anticipated challenges such as: limited access to large tracts of private land, the YIR’s challenging topography, the huge number of sites to be visited, and staff safety. Next, team members traversed the reservation, taking over a year to visit the sites, validating 192 of the reports, finding 30 unreported sites, documenting findings with site reports and photos, inputting all

information into YEDSS, and producing GIS maps and reports. Using GIS skills learned in year one, YTEP staff also conducted a geospatial analysis of the YIR’s contours, estimating locations of potential sediment pollution on the reservation. All of these findings were presented to the Tribal Council, and were used to develop a public awareness initiative on environmental hazard risk reduction. For this campaign, an informational booklet was mailed to over 400 tribal households and six pamphlets on wide-ranging community environmental concerns were placed at all tribal facilities.

Phase three, completed during a six-month no-cost extension period at the end of the project, was to create a plan, utilizing data gathered from the project, to inform the development of a Tribal Environmental Protection Act (TEPA). To accomplish this, YTEP staff researched TEPAs of many other tribes, consulted with the Yurok Tribal Legal Department, learned how to develop TEPAs and less extensive environmental regulatory frameworks, and began sharing research with staff in various tribal offices.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

YTEP environmental specialist Joe Hostler stated, “The project has given the tribe - the community, council members, and our department - a much better handle on what our real environmental problems are, instead of anecdotal information or speculation. The project has also heightened community awareness, helping give people and tribal leaders new ways of thinking about the environment, pollution, and environmental stewardship.” According to the project director, this enhanced awareness, along with the tribal government’s commitment to protecting tribal lands and the YTEP team’s expanded capacity to gather, store, and analyze field data, bodes well for the Yurok Tribe’s long-term capacity to protect the environment on the Yurok Reservation.