Boys & Girls Club opens in Klamath

Club will feature cultural activities, language classes and more

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Important Dates

August 4 - Basket Class - 1pm - Morek Won

August 5 - Annual Tribal Membership Meeting - 9:30am - Klamath
August 8 - Basket Class - 1pm - Weitchpec

August 8 - Men’s Group - 6pm - Weitchpec
August 8 - Education Comm. Mtg. - 11am - Worthington Site
August 9 - Elder’s Lunch - 1pm - Morek Won
August 9 - Cultural Wellness Group - 12pm- 3pm - Klamath

August 9 - Council (Planning) - 10am - Klamath
August 10 - Council (Action) - 10am - Klamath

August 11 - Basket Class - 1pm - Morek Won
August 13-17 - GONA - Morek Won
August 14 - Women’s Group - 12pm - Weitchpec
August 15 - Basket Class - 1pm - Weitchpec
August 15 - Men’s Group - 6pm - Weitchpec
August 15 - UIHS Diabetes Group
August 18 - Tribal Council Candidate Statements Due - 5pm

August 19 - 55th Annual Salmon Festival - 7:30am - Klamath

August 22 - Men’s Group - 6pm - Weitchpec

August 22 - Council - 10am - Finance - Klamath
August 23 - Council (Planning) - 10am - Klamath
August 24 - Council (Action) - 10am - Weitchpec

August 25 - Last day to register for primary election
August 28 - Women’s Group - 12pm - Weitchpec
August 28 - CEDS Strategic Planning Mtg -1pm - RHC
August 29 - Basket Class - 1pm - Weitchpec

On The Cover

The Yurok Tribe is excited to announce the opening of a new branch of the Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods in Klamath.

“The Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods in Klamath is a place where our children can participate in productive activities, learn about Tribal culture and socialize with friends in a safe space,” said Yurok Tribal Councilmember Ryan Ray, who helped bring the Boys & Girls Club to Klamath. “We are thrilled to be opening this new facility in Klamath. I would like to invite the whole community to this event and express my sincere gratitude to the Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods for their commitment to our youth.”

The new recreational and educational facility on the Yurok Reservation was made possible by a partnership between the Yurok Tribe and the Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods.

“The Boys & Girls Club in Klamath will provide ample opportunities for youth to learn traditional skills, including basket making, drum making and other cultural crafts. The Club will also prioritize its **Formula for Impact** to focus on its three priority outcomes of academic success, healthy lifestyles and good character and citizenship,” said Monica Rose Interim Executive Director for the Club.

“Our goal is to give kids the educational and social skills that they need to develop into healthy adults,” added Yurok Education Director Jim McQuillen, MSW, who also played an instrumental role in making the Boys & Girls Club a reality. “We are fortunate to have a partner in the Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods that shares this same vision.”

In the summer, the Klamath Club will be open Monday through Friday from 12-7pm and will be working with youth ages 5-18.

The Tribe’s new relationship with the Boys & Girls Club — the highest profile youth institution in the US — will open up many opportunities previously unavailable to local youth. For example, club members will be able to participate in out-of-the area, age-appropriate leadership, character building and creative writing conferences. The Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods in Klamath set up cultural exchanges with other clubs around the United States. There is also a plan to partner with some of the Yurok Tribe’s professional programs, including the Fisheries, Environmental and Wildlife Departments. The goal is to bring teenage club members out to job sites to give them a real-life perspective on the potential career options that are available on the Yurok Reservation.

The Yurok Tribe is the only tribe, of California’s 109 federally recognized tribes, to have an operating Boys & Girls Club. The Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods in Klamath has three part-time staff and a full-time Unit Director. It is located at 168 Klamath Blvd., in the same building as the Yurok Youth Center. The newly renovated space is already furnished with a pool table and other table games, several computer stations and a video gaming area.
There are hundreds of kids who live in Klamath, but there are very few extracurricular activities offered locally. Families that would like their children to participate in organized sports or large-group activities have to drive for more than an hour to Crescent City. For families without a vehicle, this is next to impossible. The median family income in Klamath, $32,000, is about half of what it is for most places in the state of California and the poverty rate is close to 30 percent.

While the Tribe was working on opening the club in Klamath, the Tribal Council and Tribal staff were also developing plans to start another Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods site in the Weitchpec area. “Within six to nine months we plan on opening another facility near Weitchpec,” said McQuillen.

The Yurok Tribal Council would like to thank all of the community volunteers, who put a tremendous amount of time into remodeling the Klamath Boys and Girls Club facility. The Boys and Girls Club branch in Klamath was funded by a US Department of Justice CTAS grant, which was written by the Yurok Tribe’s Planning and Community Development and Education Departments. The Club is seeking additional funding to offer additional positive activities for local youth.
Tribe initiates operation on reservation

Environmental protection effort now in its fifth year

On July 17, a team of law enforcement and natural resource protection officers, working in partnership with the Yurok Tribe, started serving search warrants at environmentally destructive cannabis cultivation sites on the Yurok Reservation.

This cooperative marijuana eradication effort is part of Operation Yurok, an annual action that aims to eliminate illegal pot farms from on and near the reservation. These unlawful plantations are responsible for damaging critical fish and wildlife habitat, diverting cold water from fish-bearing creeks and disturbing ceremonial areas. The black market cannabis industry has also put in jeopardy the safety of the local residents on the reservation, particularly those who venture into the high country to pray, as well as harvest traditional foods, basket-making materials and plant-based medicines.

“Protecting the health and welfare of the Yurok people is our primary priority,” said Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr. “I would like to personally thank each and every law enforcement officer for helping us to protect our land, water and way of life.”

Operation Yurok, now in its fifth year, has removed from the Tribe’s territory more than 100,000 plants, multiple hash labs and all manner of unlicensed firearms, not to mention hundreds of pounds of processed marijuana buds. The street value of the yield that would have potentially been produced by the plants alone is approximately $200 million. The cultivation of cannabis is illegal on the Reservation, where there is a Zero Tolerance Policy toward all drugs, including medical marijuana. The Yurok Tribe also has a broad set of statutes that prohibit unpermitted ground disturbing activities, including grading, timber harvest and other undertakings that have the potential to irreparably harm cultural sites.

During the six-month marijuana growing season, Tribal hunters and gatherers refrain from visiting their traditional harvesting grounds because of the very real potential for a conflict with armed growers. Ceremonial practitioners, who go to the high country to pray, have similar concerns.

The Yurok Tribe recently solicited a bid to clean up a trespass grow site. The cost came in at more than $100,000 for the removal of the agricultural infrastructure and trash. It is more costly to re-contour graded areas, replant clear cuts and perform other restoration activities.

For the first time last year, the Operation Yurok team observed a small, yet noticeable, decrease in the number of grow sites on the reservation. A handful of properties previously used to cultivate marijuana were abandoned. The Yurok Tribal Council is committed to facilitating future eradication operations until the numerous threats to the community are no longer present.

“Going into the first Operation Yurok we knew that it would take several years before we would see a difference. Even if it takes another five years, we are going to eradicate this threat to our fish, our river and our lifeway. We were here long before the Green Rush and we will continue to be here long after it’s gone,” concluded Chairman O’Rourke.

Operation Yurok is comprised of the following law enforcement agencies: Yurok Public Safety Department, Bureau of Indian Affairs Law Enforcement Division and the California National Guard Counterdrug Taskforce.

Marijuana grows like this one are doing irreparable harm to the Reservation.
CULTURE CORNER

At the June Culture Committee, Greenheart Inc., an international adventure business, made a presentation about a proposed zipline and canopy tour project on the Yurok Reservation.

Greenheart has built ziplines and canopy tours everywhere from Fremont Street in Las Vegas to Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda. The owners of the conservation-minded company are working with the Yurok Economic Development Corporation to determine if a zipline and a canopy walk are a good fit for the Tribe. The purpose of Greenheart’s meeting with the Culture Committee, a key participant in the vetting process for major initiatives, was to provide information and to acquire the advisory board’s input on the prospective projects. It should be noted that the Tribal Council has not made a decision regarding the development of a zipline and canopy tour on the reservation.

Ian Green, co-owner of Greenheart, started his presentation by laying out potential plans for the zipline portion of the intended economic development endeavor. The preferred home base for the eco-tourism offering would be the Klamath Jet Boat Tours storefront. The route of the actual zipline, Green explained, would begin on Requa Hill, at the cell phone tower site. It would end on the south side of the estuary. Lasting around a minute and half, the ride would travel for approximately 6,500 feet, at an average height of 50-feet above the river’s surface.

While the Culture Committee was not opposed to a zipline in general, the board objected to the location because of its cultural significance.

“I feel this area is beautiful the way it is,” said Committee member Roberta Lindgren. “It will no longer be gorgeous if we put all of those wires up in the air above the estuary.”

As proposed, Greenheart would make the initial investment for the infrastructure, such as the actual zipline and platforms, as well as the cost of operations. For the first two years, the Tribe would receive 25 percent of the profit. After that, the split would shift to fifty-fifty, with an end goal of the Tribe becoming the majority partner. If the project is approved in the future, Green said the company would seek to hire Tribal employees. He also said the Tribe could shut down operations for periods of time, as their other indigenous clients have, so that it would not interfere with ceremonies and other important activities.

After Green’s presentation concluded, Yurok Vice Chairperson David Gensaw Sr. addressed the Culture Committee, offering the potential benefits of the project for the board members’ consideration.

“I’m not trying to convince you of what to do. I’m telling you how I feel. Our leadership today cannot leave the leadership of tomorrow without a plan to help our elders, to help our youth get an education and to reacquire our land base. We need to think about our future,” Vice Chair Gensaw said. “This project will not harm the environment. Greenheart would be invested in its success and would be taking on all of the risk. The revenue generated by this business can help our fish and help our people.”

The Committee decided to review the plans more thoroughly before making an official recommendation to the Tribal Council. Green then shared a description of what a canopy tour is and what goes into building one. A canopy tour is essentially an elevated trail that runs through treetops. Many of the aerial footpaths that Greenheart has built in the past were constructed by hand, using lightweight materials such as aluminum and other portable materials. The company uses a special fastener that does not require drilling to attach the platforms tree trunks.

Knowledgeable guides would accompany groups as they participate in this one-of-a-kind hiking experience. On the Yurok Reservation, there are plants and animals that inhabit the canopies of healthy forests and rarely, if ever, touch the ground. A canopy tour would enable visitors and locals to see up close these unique species.

“The tours offer an opportunity to educate visitors about the forest and about the Tribe,” he said.

Greenheart has briefly looked for a potential location to construct the contemplated canopy walk, but has yet to identify an ideal site. The Committee was interested in learning more about this part of the project too and requested an update at a later date.

The next item on the agenda was presented by Joe Hostler from the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program. Hostler is working with 3 interns, who are studying different aspects of prairie ecosystems on the Tribe’s lands and he asked for the Committee’s approval to move forward on the scientific inquiries. Hostler is working on an in-depth prairie study on the Yurok Reservation, where logging companies historically planted over much of the meadowlands, which are also impacted by the former ban on cultural burning and the encroachment from Douglas fir trees.

One element of the research involves taking soil samples in areas that are believed to be former prairie land. Embedded deep in the dirt are native grass seeds that never sprouted. Soil composition of the planted over prairies is also different than that of longstanding forests. The Committee has been helping Hostler locate past prairies.

Intern Chad Wilder, a forestry student, told the Committee that he was interested in doing analyzing potential changes in soil
composition in prairies overcome by fir trees versus that of native grass species. Matthew Marshal, an environmental studies student, wanted to focus his project on prairie loss as a result of fir encroachment. Paula Rose, who is studying to become a physician’s assistant, was interested in doing research on traditional foods and culturally important plants, such as hazel.

Committee member Walt Lara made a motion to approve all three projects. It was seconded by Committee member Richard Myers and passed by consensus.

The final agenda item was presented by Amanda Martinez, a Humboldt State University student. She is looking at pesticide’s impact on plants used to make traditional baskets. Her study area is within Yurok ancestral territory, including the reservation. The Committee also approved this plan.

For more information about Greenheart Inc. please go to http://www.greenheart.ca/
Salmon Festival is on Saturday, Aug 19

The 55th Annual Klamath Salmon Festival is on Saturday, August 19.

The theme of this year’s festival is Resilience, Restore, Revitalize – Language, Culture, Klamath. The free event starts at 7:30 a.m. with a Klamath Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Veterans Breakfast at the Klamath Community Center, which is followed by a parade on Klamath Blvd. at 10:00 a.m.

For those interested in starting the day with a workout, the Yurok Tribe is putting on the Ney-Puey 5k Run/Walk. Another feature of the festival is a kids’ area complete with a bounce house, slide and more.

Rock band, Dr. Squid, is headlining this year’s Klamath Salmon Festival. The Humboldt band plays a danceable blend of music that can be appreciated by anyone, regardless of age.

The Salmon Festival’s Classic Car Show, organized by Yurok Tribal member George and Marla Smoker, is in its eighth year. The Car Show offers a fine collection of classy automobiles.

Be sure to check out the highly competitive Softball and Stick Game Tournaments. The highly competitive game will be played by many Tribes in the region.
The Yurok Department of Public Safety has funds to send Yurok Tribal members, who meet minimum qualifications, to the police academy. To apply for the funds, please contact Macy Bommelyn at (707) 482-8185.
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Dr. SQUID is Headlining the Yurok Tribe’s 55th Annual Klamath Salmon Festival

RESILIENCE RESTORE REVITALIZE

THE SALMON FESTIVAL IS ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 19