



Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

AAWOK



See story about visionary Tribal leader, Troy Fletcher, on Page 4.



SUSAN MASTEN

It has been my greatest honor and privilege to serve the Yurok people. We are in the midst of historic phase of positive growth that has resulted in a number of courageous construction projects, additional services and more jobs. It is my sincerest hope that the Tribe continues on this trajectory toward self-sufficiency. I pray for the best for the Tribe in all future endeavors.

1. Yurok Economic Development Corporation plans to develop a canopy walk way and zip line tour, as well as glamping at Redwood RV Park

The YEDC is working on creating a redwood canopy walk and zip line tour on Tribal lands. This environmentally sustainable attraction will be available for both tourists and locals. YEDC is developing plans for the adventurous activity, which will be staffed by equally adventurous Yurok Tribal members. We know that nearly all of the Redwood Hotel Casino patrons visit Yurok Country to hike the redwoods. The zip lines and canopy tour will have a cultural element and is sure to captivate our guests at Redwood Hotel Casino and Yurok Country Visitor Center, as well as the millions of Redwood National and State Park visitors. This will no doubt be another successful job-creating venture, or should I say adventure.

In addition to this project, YEDC is working on glamping accommodations at the Redwood RV Park, formerly Cat's RV Park.

Glamping is essentially full-service camping. The park is going to be the first upscale glamping destination on the Klamath River.

2. New Tribal technological advances

Starting in December, all Yurok Tribe will have the capacity to broadcast Tribal Council meetings online and in real-time. All that is required is a reliable internet connection. Soon, there will be link on yuroktribe.org, explaining how to watch the Council meetings on the computer. It is our hope that the increased accessibility to information will boost the Tribal membership's engagement in the decision-making process and bring improved transparency to the Tribal government. This new technology will also make it possible to broadcast other events, such as press conferences and trainings.

3. Development of interim youth center at old Blake's market and more

The Yurok Tribe has begun work on an interim Yurok Youth Center, which will be housed in the old Blake's Market in Klamath Glen. The former grocery store has already been gutted and we have received \$25,000 from California's Building Healthy Communities to renovate the large building. Right now, we are looking for community input in terms of what should be offered at the Youth Center. In addition to building a healthy space for youth, we are also working on plans to create a new Youth Center with a gymnasium for basketball and an activities room. It will also have easy access to soccer and baseball fields in the Glen area.

3. New Police Department office grant received and plans underway.

The Yurok Tribe Department of Public Safety recently received a grant from the US Department of Justice. The grant will make it possible to build a more practical building for the quickly expanding, professional police force. The new Public Safety office will be centrally located next to the new Yurok Justice Center.

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On The Cover

Yurok Tribal member and luminary Troy Fletcher will forever be missed. Fletcher's tremendous contributions to the Tribe will never be forgotten.

4. Yurok Tribe/ Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria sign historic pact.

The Yurok Tribe and the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria signed an historic agreement, committing the services of one Yurok Public Safety officer to the Rancheria.

Leaders from both Tribal governments had a signing ceremony at the Bear River Rancheria's Tribal headquarters. According to the accord, the Yurok Public Safety Department will dedicate one, full-time officer to "maintaining a presence on Bear River Tribal Lands." The Rancheria will provide funding for the officer, as well as administrative costs. Bear River will also equip the Yurok Public Safety officer with a vehicle and office space, according to the agreement.

5. Senior Advocate position being created to develop senior programs/services

The Yurok Tribal Council budgeted for a Senior Advocate position. The Senior Advocate will be tasked with developing a Senior Program, which will offer a diverse set of direct services. These new services will be specifically designed to assist our elderly Tribal members in a culturally appropriate way. We would not be here if not for the sacrifice of our elders, who endured terrible times to ensure that our traditions remained intact.

6. Update Klamath Boulevard

The Klamath Gateway Project is coming together smoothly. It seems like major progress is accomplished every day. The concrete work on the pedestrian-friendly sidewalks are complete. Most of the sleek, solar-powered street lights are set in place. After this part of the project is finished, the crew will be putting in lovely green landscaping, which will further increase the beauty of the boulevard. In the final phase of the project, medians will be installed to slow down traffic on the road, where children are almost always present. It is awesome to have Yuroks working so hard to make our community safer and to increase the quality of life for all residents.

Again, thank you very much for this opportunity to serve you . Please don't hesitate to call if I can be of any service to you in the future (707) 951-2489. ❄️

New leaders take office



James Dunlap begins first term as Chairman of the Yurok Tribe



David Gensaw starts serving as the Yurok Tribe's Vice Chairman

Tribe mourns loss of luminary leader

Troy Fletcher was the Tribe's first Fisheries manager and so much more

It is with deep despair and a heavy heart that we announce the untimely passing of Tribal luminary, Troy Fletcher.

"This is a tragic loss for the Yurok people, so tragic that words cannot express how we feel," said Thomas P. O'Rourke Sr., former Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. "Troy accomplished things that many people thought were impossible. We will forever be grateful for Troy's tremendous contribution to the Tribe. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family."

"We are all devastated by the passing of our friend, brother and colleague," added Susan Masten, who worked with him for decades. "Troy dedicated his life and put his heart and soul into his effort to protect and restore the Klamath River. He will be greatly missed by all."

Fletcher, a longtime Executive Director for the Yurok Tribe, passed away after suffering from a heart attack. He started his career with the Yurok Tribe as the first Tribal fisheries manager in 1994.

The Yurok Tribal member and visionary leader ran the day-to-day operations of the Tribal government. He played a prominent part in nearly every important Tribal policy decision, land acquisition, litigation and legislative effort in the last 20 years.

Fletcher, a tenacious Tribal advocate, accumulated a long list of history-making accomplishments, such as sowing the seeds that started the Tribe's natural resource protection programs, during his time working for the Tribe. While the truly humble human being would never take the credit, Fletcher was responsible for ending a generations-long conflict between many competing Klamath River-based interests, including: farmers, commercial fishers, a power company, environmental groups and other Tribes. Turning this group of fierce, former adversaries into a cooperative coalition, focused on removing four Klamath dams and creating a plan for equitable water use was just one the many achievements in his storied career.

"Troy's integrity and innate leadership skills made him a magnet to all," said Dave Hillemeier, the Yurok Fisheries Program Manager. "We have lost a beloved friend, father, son, husband, mentor, leader, boss and a person respected by those from all walks of life."

The benevolent boss instilled many positive principles into his employees and empowered them to achieve greatness. He



Fletcher advocates for the Tribe to a group of government officials and others.

valued initiative and preparedness. Fletcher treated all of the staff fairly and with respect. He emphasized the importance of developing meaningful relationships with representatives of outside agencies. In Fletcher's opinion, the Tribe had a right and an obligation to manage all of the lands within Yurok ancestral territory and places that affect the Tribe, such as upriver from its borders. He saw those who opposed him as an opportunity to build a bridge. Before making any decisions involving natural resources, he first asked, "Does this work for fish?"

Fletcher also filled an irreplaceable role in the Tribe's effort to reacquire substantial swaths of land within Yurok territory. His behind-the-scenes work paved the way for the Tribe to procure more than 35,000 acres in the Pecwan and Blue Creek watersheds. Both of these drainages, located in the Tribe's traditional territory, are culturally invaluable and incredibly important for fish and wildlife populations.

In 1999 Fletcher transitioned to the Executive Director position. As the Fisheries Manager and then as Executive Director, he established the Tribe's, award-winning Watershed Restoration and Environmental Programs and expanded the Fisheries Program. Today, these programs have more 70 staff that are committed to improving environmental conditions in Yurok ancestral territory.

The universally respected administrator managed more than a dozen departments and 300-plus personnel. Most

recently, Fletcher was shepherding a strategy to spur the United States Congress into creating legislation that would broaden the Reservation's boundaries to include the recent land purchases and increase the Tribe's role in managing the lands within Yurok ancestral territory. He was also working with representatives of the federal government to release the remaining elements of the Hoopa/Yurok Settlement Act.

The distinguished director worked his way from a fisheries technician to overseeing the fast-growing Tribal government. On behalf of the Yurok people, Fletcher testified before Congress, presented to numerous state and federal regulatory committees and travelled to Washington DC many times to

advocate for Tribal rights and to improve conditions on the Klamath River.

Fletcher was raised in Pecwan, which is where he spawned a life-long connection to the Klamath River. He committed his entire adult life to restoring the river, preserving Tribal culture and returning the Tribe to its rightful role in Yurok Country. He leaves behind his parents, Jacqueline and Don Winter, his sons Troy Fletcher Jr., Cody and Zachary, grandchildren Cody Jr. and Raa-yoy, as well as his wife Kari. The family asks that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Aawok Troy Fletcher Memorial Fund, through the Humboldt Area Foundation. HAF's address is 373 Indianola Rd., Bayside Ca 95524. ✱

Yurok gets publisher for graphic novel

Illustriously illustrated book features Yurok WWI veterans

Chag Lowry is perfectly positioned to honor the many Yurok World War I veterans, who put their lives on the line to protect Tribe's homeland.

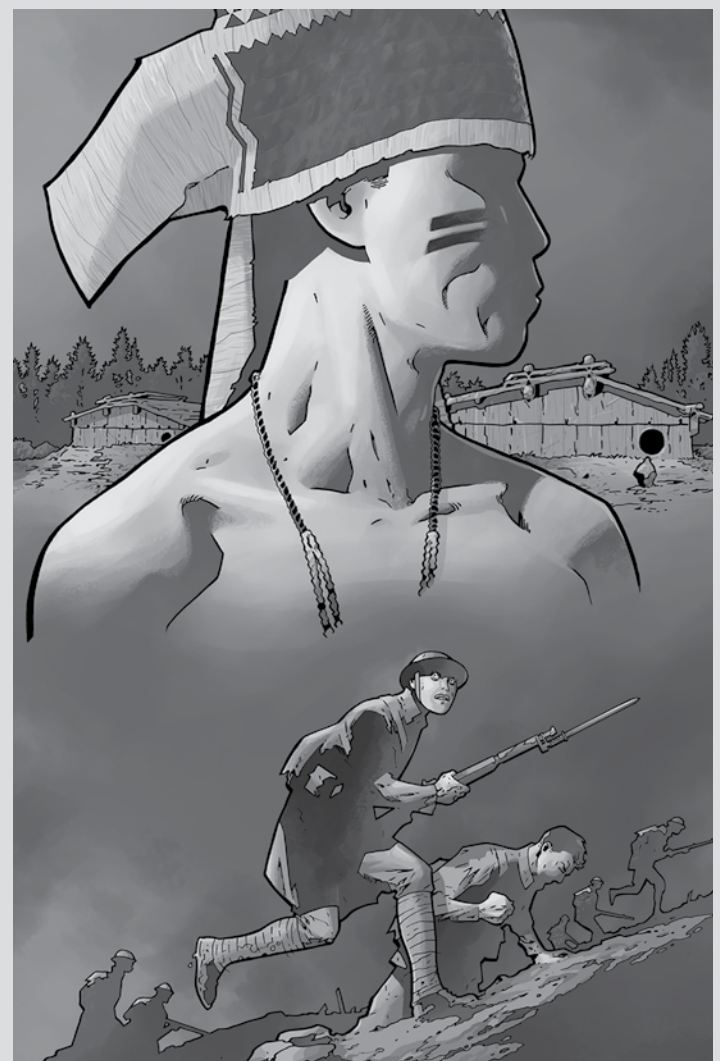
Lowry, Yurok/Maidu/Pit River, is the author of several publications focusing on the history of Tribal people's participation in the armed forces, including *The Original Patriots*, a 270-book about indigenous, World War II veterans. For more than 20 years, the Pecwan descendant studied this tempestuous topic, which is all but hidden from the historical record. The 2014 Jewell Ryan-White Cultural Diversity Award winner is currently working on a graphic novel, titled *Soldiers Unknown*. The illustriously illustrated book seeks to capture the complex nature of Yurok involvement in World War I and to acknowledge the tremendous adversity that Tribal families had to transcend, during one of the most macabre conflicts in history.


The visually stimulating chronicle starts with a father speaking to his son at the Jump Dance. They talk of the son's grandfather, a WWI veteran. The former army soldier is one of three Yurok characters who leave the predominantly peaceful shores of the Klamath River at Pecwan to fight in the "War to End All Wars," which started just 50 years after the calamity of colonization commenced on Yurok lands.

Although *Unknown Soldiers* is a work of fiction, found in the book are authentic anecdotes that Lowry learned about from relatives of Yurok World I & II veterans, while conducting interviews for his previous projects.

"There will be a lot true elements in the story," Lowry said. "My goal with this graphic novel is to create a publication that honors and tells the stories of these soldiers."

Soldiers Unknown contains vibrant vignettes, featuring the rigorous roles





that Yurok people filled in the foreign war, a feature that is not found in history books. Despite the fact that an estimated 10,000 Native Americans served in WWI, there aren't any pictures of Native soldiers carrying injured comrades to the field hospitals, fighting in the trenches or participating in the massive victory parades.

"The image of Native men in a World War I uniform is not an image that most would conjure up, but that's a big part of who we are," Lowry said. "The graphic novel format is terrific. We'll be able to show images of history and culture that don't exist anywhere else."

Many young Yurok men, like the characters in *Soldiers Unknown*, were drafted into WWI, but they were not forced to fight, like other men in the United States. The US government could not legally compel Natives into combat because they were not considered citizens. The Indian Citizens Act was not passed until 1924, six years after the war ended. Approximately 90 percent of the Yurok men capable of soldiering in the war volunteered to be sent overseas, according to the most accurate statistics available.

For Yurok soldiers, coping with the chaos of war, was a completely different experience than it was for their white compatriots, many of whom had combat experience. In the early 1900s, the US military was deployed to fight in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine-American War and in other lesser clashes.

Another key element in *Soldiers Unknown* is a scene on the Meuse River, which flows through the Argonne Forest. The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was not only the biggest battle in WWI, it is the largest single clash in US history. The Americans deployed ten divisions, each containing 26,000 men, including Native Americans, to the wooded area straddling the French/German border.

"These Indian guys from Pecwan leave to fight a war half way across the world and end up fighting in a place that looks a lot like home. One has to wonder what that was like," Lowry said.

Life for Yuroks at that time was in several ways similar to how it was prior to European contact. The Yurok language was spoken by most, the Jump Dance was conducted regularly and the village governing system was intact. A social structure, based on balance and harmony with all things, continued to permeate the culture.

"This was the first European-style conflict that Natives participated in. I am trying to show how different the experience was for Yurok men. In war there is a complete breakdown of order," said the soft-spoken historian. "The only rule was you had

to survive and you had to kill to survive in trench warfare."

When WWI started, the most common strategy employed by both German and allied forces was to fight in a relatively open area, just as it had been done for the previous century. Both sides, for the first time in history, used massive machine guns, rather than rudimentary rifles with bayonets, to literally cut down the opposing force. Along with the improvements in small arms, came an advancement in large artillery. After the Battle of Marne in 1914, the Allies and Central armies fought almost exclusively from mud-lined trenches. The men would carve out a web of eight-foot-deep grooves in the earth that faced the other side's almost identical tactical arrangement. The narrow channels served as shelters, shooting platforms and field hospitals. Each side would sometimes leave the relative safety of the furrows to battle it out for control of a specific piece of land. The trenches were easy targets for other new armaments, such as grenades, flame throwers and munitions filled with mustard and chlorine gas. Yurok veteran, Robert Spott, an Army soldier, suffered the ill effects of the caustic chemical weapons.

"World War I was fought with 19th century tactics and 20th century technology," Lowry said.

Yurok infantry men had to live inside this nightmare of prodigious proportions for a whole year. Worse than that, they received almost no acknowledgement for putting their lives in front of the most violent force the world has ever known, at a time when the wounds of colonization had not yet healed.

"All of those men who survived, how did they reintegrate? That is the question," Lowry said. "They were suffering from undiagnosed PTSD on top of undiagnosed PTSD. They were still reeling from colonization. What I am going to try to convey is that they had a ceremony that hopefully helped them. For some, I think it did. For others, I don't think they were ever able to heal, which is completely understandable."

In addition to portraying the reality that Yurok veterans faced in this faraway war, the acclaimed author is going to highlight how the families reacted when their sons, brothers and fathers left for the war, another topic that is rarely, if ever, explored in documentaries, feature films or any other kind of medium.

"The people who read this book will be able to see that perspective and they will be able to see it through the perspective of Native people," Lowry said.

The Artist

Lowry wrote all of the words in *Soldiers Unknown*. The ground-breaking graphics are being produced by Rahsan Ekedal,

a prominent comic artist, currently living in Berlin, Germany. A chance encounter in the Bay Area connected the two highly talented men. Lowry was in San Francisco for a philanthropical seminar, which was across the street from Wonder Con, a festive event, where comic book enthusiasts commonly dress up as their favorite super hero or villain. Intrigued by the colorful crowd and having an hour to burn before a flight back to Arcata, Lowry ventured inside the San Francisco Marriot Marquis. Shortly thereafter, Lowry literally looked at a list of 60 comic artists and selected the most interesting appellation. He quickly found Ekedan and pitched his project. The graphic artist was very interested in illustrating the book, but there was one more step. Lowry asked him to draw Sgt. Rock, an infamous World War II comic character.

“I got to watch him dive into the art. It was very impressive and he did it in 30 minutes with the chaos of the event going on all around him,” Lowry said. “I can’t believe the first artist I asked, said ‘yes’. It’s unheard of. My ancestors, I think, are guiding me to this.”

The Future

One of the most challenging parts of publishing a book is finding a backer to produce and promote the end product of a time-consuming and difficult process. Many would-be authors write books that never get printed. Heyday Books, a well-known Bay Area company, has agreed to print and publicize Lowry’s novel.

The first edition of *Soldiers Unknown* will be on the shelves in 2017, which serendipitously coincides with the 100-year anniversary of the US military’s entrance into World War 1. In 2018, Lowry plans to visit France, a trip he is currently fundraising for, where a centenary celebration is happening to commemorate the end of the war.

“I want to show the book there, so there is a Native presence,” Lowry said.

Coincidentally, France gave Robert Spott the Croix de Guerre, the highest honor awarded to French soldiers. However, Lowry has not been able to uncover why Spott received this rare accolade. He speculates that since Spott was a courier he must have carried some important information, such as enemy troop movements, which greatly benefitted the Allied Forces.

“Being a courier was one of the most dangerous jobs on the front line,” Lowry said. “There were snipers, whose sole focus was to stop the flow of information.”

While in France, Lowry wants to look through the European country’s military records in hopes of identifying what the Tribal member did to earn the Croix de Guerre. Spott’s heroic contribution was not acknowledged by the United States. Lowry

is lobbying for local congressman Jarrod Huffman to look into Spott’s military achievements, because whatever he did deserves recognition, even if is posthumously.

“My question is, if Robert Spott got the French equivalent of a Medal of Honor than why should he not receive the American equivalent?” Lowry said. “If they gave a posthumous Medal of Honor to an African American and Jewish American, why wouldn’t they give it to a Native American?”

The Great War resulted in more than 38 million deaths and 20 million more were maimed, during the many land, sea and to a lesser extent air battles. The Tribal soldiers in that war endured an amazing amount of adversity and received almost no recognition for putting their lives on the line to protect those back home.

“In all of the interviews that I have conducted with Native veterans and their families, the opportunity to share the story is a key part of healing. That’s what my hope is. That this work will be something that brings healing,” Lowry concluded. ✨



YUROK TRIBE

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Yurok Tribe will hold three public hearings to accept comments from Yurok Tribal members on the following draft legislation:

- **STAY IN SCHOOL ORDINANCE:** a new ordinance for the purposes of establishing procedures and identifying resources for truant Yurok students and their families.

The Yurok Tribal Council has referred the above draft legislation to public hearing in accordance with the Yurok Tribal Public Hearing Ordinance. Public hearings are scheduled for:

January 5, 2016 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. Klamath Office Administration 190 Klamath Blvd. Klamath, CA 95548	January 5, 2016 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. Weitchpec Office Hwy 96 Weitchpec, CA	January 5, 2016 6 p.m. – 7p.m. Former Worthington School 3400 Erie St Eureka, CA
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DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

Hard copies of the draft ordinances will be available at the public hearings, and at the Weitchpec and Klamath offices. You can also get a hard copy by contacting Cheyenne Sanders at 707-482-1350 x1397 or email csanders@yuroktribe.nsn.us to request an electronic copy.

REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

The Yurok Tribe is interested in receiving comments from members of the Yurok Tribe and Yurok Reservation community regarding all aspects of the draft legislation. Oral comments can be made during the public hearing. Comments may also be submitted in writing. All comments must be received by **5:00pm on Tuesday, January 12, 2016.**

Comment letters may be submitted by email at csanders@yuroktribe.nsn.us, by fax at (707) 482-1363, or by mail addressed to: Public Comment, Yurok Tribe Office of the Tribal Attorney, PO Box 1027, Klamath, CA 95548. Please indicate in your comment the draft legislation and specific section, if any, to which the comment is directed. For example, “**Comment Letter—Stay in School Ordinance.**”



YUROK TREX CULTURAL BURNS





SEE FULL STORY ON NEXT PAGE

Yurok TRES a truly great success

Fire training focuses on traditional forest management

For Yurok Firefighter Richard O'Rourke III, conducting cultural burns is about much more than fixing the forest.

"Fire is a gift that has been given to us by the Creator," the Yurok Tribal member said. "To me, applying fire in this way is bringing back our identity. We are regaining a piece of our culture."

O'Rourke is a participant in the Yurok Training Exchange, an effort brought about by the Cultural Fire Management Council and the Yurok Tribe to bring back the customary use of fire in Yurok ancestral territory. The skill building exercise was paid for through the Nature Conservancy's Fire Learning Network and led by Terra Fuego and Firestorm Inc. The Yurok TRES trainers, Jim Wills and Dan Kelleher, patient and pragmatic men, helped the Yurok Wildland Fire Department's firefighters increase their qualifications and introduced several Yuroks to the well-paying field of fire protection.

During the week and a half long Yurok TRES, approximately 90 acres were treated with meticulously managed, low-intensity fire. A hefty hazel patch, a prairie and mixed conifer and hardwood forest, located below Martins Ferry Bridge, were burned by the large group of green and expert-level cultural burn practitioners. The first Yurok TRES happened this past spring and about 150 acres received a therapeutic dose of flame.

At each spot fire was used for a different purpose. For example, hazel was burned to spur the shrub into producing strong and straight sticks that are perfect for making traditional baskets. Prairies respond to cultural burning by shooting up succulent strands of grass, a major food source for mammals large and small. A certain amount of heat reduces the population of a parasitic weevil that infects both acorns and hazel nuts. A UC Berkeley researcher, conducting a study on the Yurok Reservation, in conjunction with the Yurok TRES, found that these bugs ruin up to 90 percent of these nutritious nuts.

As many as 60 trainees took part in the training exchange exercises. According to Elizabeth Azzuz, Secretary of the Cultural Fire Management Council and logistics coordinator for the burns, one of the main goals of the training was to create an opportunity for interested Yurok people to secure the skills needed to land a job in this lucrative line of work. In addition to the Yurok Wildland Fire Department, there are several other local

agencies that hire experienced men and women to fight fire, including CalFire, the US Forest Service, the Hoopa Wildland Fire Department and National Park Service.

"As a firefighter you can serve your community, stay connected to your culture and support your family," Azzuz said.

For O'Rourke, a former logger and commercial crabber, firefighting is a perfect fit. He relishes the mentally and physically arduous tasks associated with the job, such as toting torches and cutting fire lines in tough terrain. He also holds in high regard the radical improvements, resulting from the low intensity fires, to forest and prairie ecosystems.

"It's very rewarding, knowing that I can apply fire or fight fire for my community," he said.

Firefighters can employ the massive mountain of information the instructors' imparted to the participants of the Yurok TRES at any fire organization in the United States.

"We're trained with the standards that every fire fighter in America is trained to," O'Rourke said. "Anywhere you go, you can jump right in and do the work."

While working with fire is demanding, those drawn to this occupation tend to be thoughtful individuals, willing to take the time to help rookies learn the ropes.

"Fire fighters are real giving and forthright people, who have a lot of character," O'Rourke said. "It is a brotherhood. The people on the line, they're your family."

In addition to being healthy, a successful fire fighter has to have integrity, accountability and the ability to follow the chain of command.

"You have to think outside of your comfort zone," O'Rourke said. "It's a profession that demands that you be on your game."

During the fall burns, there were no real injuries, a testament to the trainers' and trainees single-minded approach to safety.

"We really concentrate on keeping each other safe," O'Rourke said.

Fire benefits

All of the native plant species in Yurok Country are adapted to fire. The Yurok Tribe has used fire for millennia for myriad purposes. However, the federal government banned the cultural burning practice a century ago. Since then, logging companies

have deforested almost all of Yurok ancestral territory. These corporations have also planted trees on much of the former prairie land. These two activities have resulted in an across-the-board reduction in mammal populations, many of which are important food sources for the Tribe. Cultural burns are the most efficient method for mending the forest and grasslands.

“Fire is the sharpest tool in our shed to keep our land healthy,” O’Rourke said. “It keeps the cycle of life going. It will feed our families for generations to come.”

In addition to diminishing the forest’s capacity to produce sustainable foods, the forestry practices of the past, have also created the perfect conditions for an out-of-control wildfire. The build-up of brush is so bad, that fire experts believe, if nothing is done, that a cataclysmic conflagration, threatening ecosystems, property and human lives, will happen one day soon.

The reintroduction of cultural burning, which can drastically reduce dangerous fuel loading, is the most economical and expedient way to prevent this extremely plausible catastrophe from ever coming over the horizon.

The members of the Yurok TREX have already begun planning another burn slated for this spring. The invaluable skills that the participants will learn are precisely the ones needed to protect and fortify the forests surrounding Yurok Country from a fatal fire.

“The more I learn, the more I can apply,” concluded O’Rourke.

The Cultural Fire Management Council would like to give a special thanks to Nels Nelson, Rod Mendes, Frankie Joe Myers and Steve Gibbens.

Please contact Alita Redner at (530) 625-4130 to sign up to participate in the spring TREX. ✨

CULTURE CORNER

The first topic at the September Culture Committee meeting featured a proposed amended probate ordinance. The Tribe’s current probate ordinance is limited to Jessie Short distributions, and has limited applicability. The proposed amended probate ordinance has a much wider scope and is designed to apply to most estates. The draft ordinance is in the first phase of the process and before the Tribal Council votes on it, there will be numerous opportunities for the Tribal membership to provide input on the proposed piece of legislation. Jolanda Ingram-Obie, an attorney with the Yurok Tribal Court, and Cheyenne Sanders, the Associate General Counsel for the Yurok Tribe, made the presentation.

Following Ingram-Obie’s opening remarks about the importance of creating a will, the conversation quickly turned into a deep discussion about traditional marriage practices.

“There’s a full marriage, which involves accepting a dowry,” said Culture Committee member Richard Myers. “There’s another one called a half marriage when the man moves to the woman’s village and all assets stay with the woman’s family.”

“When you have a half marriage in a customary village and it doesn’t work, whatever you paid for the wife, if it’s not paid back, the children don’t have rights to the name or anything like that,” added Committee member, Darlene Magee. “In the old days that’s the way it was. If you didn’t pay it back, the children didn’t have rights to anything.”

Frank Lara, also a Committee member,


further discussed the details associated with a half marriage.

“If the man doesn’t have enough money, he will go to the woman’s family and negotiate,” Lara said. “They might say, ‘you can come and live with us, but you are working with us, so we can judge you.’ Say he’s there for a year working for the family and they pull him in and say ‘judgement day is here.’ They say, ‘you’re alright.’ If it doesn’t work out down the road, he can leave, but can’t take the children. That is the way I understood it from the ocean people, the Ner-er-er. The river people might have a different opinion.”

Lara further explained that in a full marriage, where a bride price was paid, the man had rights to the kids.

“In today’s society nobody buys anybody. I see a lot of guys go and live at their wife’s parents’ house. There should be a more modern definition of today’s marriage. A shack job was not customary. What you hear these people talk about is customary,” said Mel Brooks, also a Committee member. “I see a lot of guys’ stay with woman until their money runs out. That is not customary.”

Before any decisions are made about the proposed amended probate ordinance there will be multiple public meetings, where Tribal membership will have an opportunity to provide input. Jolanda Ingram Obie, an attorney for the Yurok Tribal Court, explained that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has only approved probate codes for two tribes. An amended probate code, if approved by the BIA, would mean that the Department of Interior would be required to



probate trust lands within the Yurok Reservation pursuant to Yurok law. With some additional steps, a Yurok judge could eventually probate trust and restricted lands within the Yurok Reservation in Yurok Tribe Court. The proposed amended probate ordinance has the potential to be a great exercise of tribal sovereignty for Yurok Country.

“The BIA is a huge agency and it is very slow to assist,” said John Melvin, who is the Chairman of the Culture Committee and is currently working with BIA on his family’s allotments. “It will be much better when the Tribe assumes the tasks of allotment probates, rather than the BIA.”

Ingram Obie also talked about the benefits of forming a will. If a person has a will, he or she has the ability to decide how his/her assets will be distributed after death. Also, if the author of the will is incapacitated by injury or illness, the document can outline how resources are used for the best benefit of the will holder.

“A will is really important,” said Committee Member Mel Brooks. “That is something that should be stressed.”

Cheyenne Sanders, a Yurok Tribal member, emphasized that creating a will is the best way to protect family-owned assets, land and other resources. When a person passes away and doesn’t have a will, the BIA or the state, depending on the designation of his/her land, will determine what happens to the property. She also noted that the proposed ordinance will only focus on land ownership and will not involve child custody. However, she noted that if the Tribal membership is interested in a tribal law that covers probate guardianships over minors, the membership should speak to their Council district representatives about the need for a separate ordinance.

Katelynn Reed, a local graduate student was on the Culture

Committee’s second agenda item. Reed is working on an article about California’s carbon credit market and the Tribe’s carbon program. She asked the committee for their thoughts.

“At first I was against it,” said Walt Lara Sr. a former Yurok forester and Tribal elder. “After a lot of discussion, I changed my mind. The management of these lands has created many jobs. It’s making money for us to buy land, and we don’t have to log anything. If we didn’t buy it, someone else would have.”

Susan Masten, outgoing Vice Chair for the Yurok Tribe and regular Culture Committee attendee, picked up where Lara left off.

“It works for us because it is consistent with our cultural values. It allowed us to reacquire land in our aboriginal territory, which we would have not been able to do in a very long time. If we didn’t purchase this land, a timber company would have and it would have been logged.”

It was also mentioned that the Tribe can rehabilitate the forests and protect the creeks that run through the Tribally owned properties. Additionally, there is a potential for prairie restoration and other traditional land management practices.

“We can leave the snags in place for woodpeckers,” Lara said.

Lara told Reed that the Yurok Constitution requires that the Tribe buyback all of the ancestral territory.

The carbon program properties border national forest land designated as wilderness, which is off-limits to logging, creating continuous habitat for native wildlife. It is in one the most biologically diverse places in North America.

“If they protect their part and we protect our part we are in pretty good shape,” concluded Bob McConnell, the Yurok Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer and Culture Committee meeting facilitator. ✨

Yurok Tribe, Bear River sign historic agreement

The Yurok Tribe and the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria signed an historic agreement, committing the services of one Yurok Public Safety officer to the Rancheria.

Leaders from both Tribal governments participated in a signing ceremony at the Bear River Rancheria’s Tribal headquarters. According to the momentous accord, the Yurok Public Safety Department will dedicate one, full-time officer to “maintaining a presence on Bear River Tribal Lands.” In exchange, the Rancheria will provide compensation for the officer and that of a support staff member.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to conduct this important public service on behalf of the Bear River Rancheria,” said Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr., outgoing Chairman. “We very much look forward to providing the Bear River community with the professional police services that they deserve.”

The specific hours of this officer “will be determined based on the needs of the Bear River community,” according to the agreement. The officer will be deputized as a Bear River Tribal Police Services Officer and will be afforded an office at the Tish Non Community Center. Additionally, Bear River will equip the Yurok Public Safety officer with a vehicle. ✨

Tribe creating Yurok Youth Center

Community members asked to assist in designing youth space

In early November, the Yurok Tribe began renovating a Tribally-owned property for the purpose of providing a safe space for Klamath kids to play and participate in an array of healthy activities.

The Yurok Youth Center will be housed in the former Blake's Market building in Klamath Glen. The 2,000 square-foot structure needs only a few repairs and sits on a sizeable piece of land.

"I can already see it," said Ryan Ray, the Yurok Tribal Council's Requa District Representative. "We can put in things like a pool table, ping pong table and computer stations, but what will be offered at the center is completely up to community. The community is going to design this center to best fit their needs."

On Friday, November 6, the Yurok Planning and Community Development Department, the Environmental Program and other various staff members worked with Hoopa Tribal Civilian Community Corps to remove from the building's interior several old refrigeration units, shelves and other debris. The hard-working crew also cut down the big berry briars that were encroaching on the sides of the store. A complete makeover will soon commence on the two-tiered property.

The Yurok Planning Department secured \$25,000 in grant funding from the California Endowment for Healthy Communities Initiative to transform the sturdy and spacious structure into a positive place for local kids to congregate and recreate. When it's open, the Yurok Youth Center will at all times have an adult supervisor.

The Yurok Transportation Program is committed to bussing children, living in the Klamath town-site and surrounding area, to and from the center.

Currently, the opportunities for kids in the Klamath area are limited. The Yurok Youth Center will provide a perfect place for local boys and girls to engage in purposeful and productive activities.

Mandy Mager, the assistant director for the Planning Department, said the Tribe is looking to form a local branch of a national, youth-oriented organization, such as 4-H or Boys and Girls Club, which would be run out of the new center. Creating a chapter of an established entity will make it possible to secure sustainable funding for long-term and near-term projects and programs. Recently, Yurok Tribal staff and community members



Emery Mattz of the Yurok Environmental Program helps clear out the Youth Center.

met with representatives from 4-H.

"It is not widely known, but it is possible to form a 4-H program around almost any type of activity, such as computer science, music and even cultural skills," Mager said.

The Tribe is also planning to expand an apple orchard on the property to include vegetables and flowers. The garden will be used to teach the adolescents at the Youth Center how to grow food.

"We want to provide a mechanism for local kids to learn how to grow fresh produce," Mager said. "There is a potential for the kids at the Youth Center to sell some of the fresh produce to Pem-mey Fuel Mart and at other Tribally owned businesses. The money earned could be used to create additional opportunities at the center and instill a sense of ownership within the kids who enjoy it."

The Yurok Tribe is seeking community's assistance in identifying the priorities for what will be offered at the Yurok Youth Center.

"Given the size of the structure and the property, the opportunities are really endless. I invite the community to get involved in the planning process and, when it's finished, to volunteer at the center. This is going to be your Yurok Youth Center," concluded Council Representative Ray. ❄

PUBLIC SAFETY - ARREST LOG 🚔

*** Those arrested are considered innocent until proven guilty in Tribal Court.**

November 10, 2015 – Blake Mendez – Public intoxication

November 12, 2015 – Daniel Nova – Under the influence of a controlled substance

Learn more about Yurok DV Program

Program provides culturally appropriate services for adults and kids

The Yurok DV Program provides culturally appropriate support for Tribal members harmed by domestic violence.

The holistic offering is operated out of the Yurok Justice Center. The Tribal Program has offices in Klamath, Weitchpec and Eureka. On the coast, its service area spans from Eureka to Crescent City. In the inland area, it covers everywhere between Weitchpec and Hoopa.

The Program coordinates with all of the relevant, local service providers to help victims obtain the resources that they need, such as shelter, transportation and medical treatment. Counselling and other important services can also be acquired directly through the program.

The Yurok DV Program also coordinates resources for children impacted by intimate partner violence. The YDVP has developed similar, expanded network of service providers for children, too.

“In almost every case that we see there are kids involved,” said Vicky Bates, Yurok DV Program Services Coordinator and Yurok Tribal member.

Most commonly, clients are referred to the program by the courts, law enforcement and child protective services. However, victims of domestic abuse also call the program for help. The program practices a sophisticated set of protocols put in place to ensure that all of their clients will forever remain confidential. If there is a scenario where a spouse thinks that she or he is in danger, but is not ready to leave, the DV Program provides a phone that can be stashed and used if it appears that a violent situation is about to unfold. Each of the Yurok Domestic Violence Program staff are equipped with an emergency kit, filled with clothes, a tooth brush and other items that a person might need when forced to abruptly leave their home. They also have bus passes and gas vouchers.

“The emergency kits are for if some calls and says, ‘I need to get out of here now,’” Bates explained.

In addition to working with victims of abuse, every week the program’s staff facilitates a women’s group in Klamath and in Weitchpec. The informal gatherings, in which a license therapist takes part, are designed to empower all females, regardless of their relationship status, to achieve their goals.

“The meeting is a group of women who want to have time to talk with other women about healing and healthy living,” Bates said.

The Weitchpec meeting is Mondays from 1 p.m. to 3p.m. The one in Klamath is on Tuesdays and goes from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Yurok DV Program also puts on a number of culturally centered activities for Yurok youths, such as collecting hazel sticks and spruce roots for making traditional baskets. They also organize beading workshops, where the kids create jewelry.

“Their beautiful jewelry is on sale at the Yurok Country Visitor Center and at the Otter Creek Gift Shop, located inside Redwood Hotel Casino and when it sells those who made it will receive money,” Bates said.

Currently, the DV program is working on lining up Yurok language classes, a mural making event at the Yurok Country Visitor Center and additional cultural activities through the 7th Generation Fund.

“The reason why we we’re working with kids is to build awareness,” Bates explained. “Everything we do is to help the kids obtain the skills necessary to live a healthy life.”

To let people know about the available services, the DV Program participates in events arranged by the Rape Crisis Centers in Humboldt and Del Norte and other public functions. To reach the Yurok Domestic Violence Program, please call (707) 482-1350.

Rochelle “Chelle” Brown, a Crisis Working and Victim Advocate works in Klamath on Tuesday and Wednesday and in Weitchpec on Monday and Thursday. Kayla Henry is based in Eureka and covers all of Humboldt, except Weitchpec and Hoopa. Brown has lived around the area from Lake Earl to Ka-tep and is knowledgeable of the people and lifestyles. Henry has been living here all her life and has previous work experience with the Humboldt County District Attorney’s office with the Victim Witness Program. ✨

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF SEIZURE AND INITIATION OF FOREFEITURE PROCEEDINGS

On September 1, 2015, near Blake’s Landing, Klamath, Yurok Reservation, Humboldt County, California, Yurok Tribal Police Officers seized property for forfeiture in connection with violation of the Yurok Tribe Controlled Substances Ordinance section 1213, to wit: **Mismarked Net**. The property seized is: one 100-foot long gill net, with buoy, tag # 5630015. Pursuant to Section 1808 of the Yurok Tribe Fishing Rights Ordinance, procedures to forfeit this property are under way. If you have a legal interest in this property, you must file a claim stating your interest in the seized property before December 10, 2015, with the Yurok Tribal Court, located at 190 Klamath Boulevard, P.O. Box 1027, Klamath, California 95548. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the property.

Sign up to live in new Trinity River Elders Village

The Yurok Indian Housing Authority is accepting applications for the Trinity River Elders Village. For eligibility, you must be 55 years or older, meet 2015 LIHTC income guidelines, along with being a federally enrolled tribal member. The Yurok Indian Housing Authority is the first to ever receive California's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Project in Indian Country! The project consists of 12 single-family units and a community building. The units feature a dishwasher, washing machine, dryer, refrigerator and a large freezer in the storage room, free internet access, each unit will have a carport, an emergency alarm system located in the bedroom and bathroom, built in shelving for easy storage, handicap accessible sinks, transportation for shopping or doctor appointments, and monthly activities in the community center. There will be various activities including nutrition, exercise, health, art, food cultivation, day trips, and many more. Solar panels are installed on each building, which are expected to offset more than 50% of the energy usage! **If you are interested in applying please contact Charity Moore at the Yurok Indian Housing Authority 707-482-1506 ext.: 1007.**✱



Tribe is looking for missing Jesse Short recipients

We are in search of the following individuals who may be eligible to receive Jessie Short funds. Assistance from family members, friends and neighbors is greatly appreciated.

Please contact Office of Tribal Attorney at (707) 482-1350 x 1304, Christa Norton, Paralegal. Information will not be given regarding award amounts or dates of any future distribution, and a person cannot be added to the Jessie Short Case. The final decision listing plaintiffs was made over 20 years ago. See list below.

Cameron, Tarquin
Chernof, Jean Smith
Crepeau, Ginger
Dowd, Gaylord
Dowd, Kenneth
Downs, Lucille
Erickson, Rocky
Gormley, Cathy
Hancorne, Charmaine
Hancorne, Virginia
Johnson, Adam
Johnston, Johnny
McCovey III, William
Mclerney, Daniel

McLaughlin, Lonnie
McLaughlin, Summer
McNertney, Robin
Norris, Gail Joann
Norris, Lisa
O'Hagan, Michael
Quinn, Jr, Gary
Scott, Wallace
Slope, Margie
Smith, Marie
Standberry, Ashley
Trimble, Jr, Frederick
Trippo, Cameron
Warren, Paul

Once again, Del Norte County is offering fee exempt licensing for Yurok Tribal members!

To receive their 2016 dog license members must:

1. Live on tribal Land
2. Show their tribal ID card at the time of licensing
3. Provide a Rabies certificate which shows current vaccination
4. Provide spay/neuter information if they wish that to be included on the license
5. Sign a Waiver of Exemption in the Animal Control office.

EFFECTIVE FROM 12/01/2015 THROUGH 02/01/2016 ONLY!



Yurok Tribe

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mmais@yuroktribe.nsn.us
www.yuroktribe.org

Yurok Today
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Klamath, CA 95548

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IMPORTANT DATES

DEC 10 - COUNCIL ACTION MTG.- 10AM - KLAMATH
DEC. 11 - CULTURE COMMITTEE MTG. - 10AM - KLAMATH

DEC. 11 - CRAFT FAIR - 12PM-6PM - WEITCHPEC
DEC 14 - WOMENS GROUP - 12PM - WEITCHPEC
DEC 15. - FOOD 4 PEOPLE 11:30 AM - WEITCHPEC

DEC 16 - COUNCIL PLANNING MTG. - 10AM- KLAMATH
DEC 17 - COUNCIL ACTION MTG. - 10AM - WEITCHPEC

DEC 18 - ANNUAL STAFF MTG. - ALL GOVT. OFFICES CLOSED
DEC 21 - WOMENS GROUP - 12:30PM - WEITCHPEC
DEC 24 - TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED AFTER 12PM
DEC 25 - TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED

JAN 5 - HEARING - STAY IN SCHOOL ORD. - 12PM-1PM - KLAMATH
JAN 5 - HEARING - STAY IN SCHOOL ORD. - 3PM-4PM - WEITCHPEC
JAN 5 - HEARING - STAY IN SCHOOL ORD. - 6PM-7PM - WORTHINGTON

JAN. 6- COUNCIL PLANNING MTG. - 10AM - KLAMATH
JAN 7 - COUNCIL ACTION MTG. - 10AM - ACTION
JAN 20 - COUNCIL PLANNING MTG. - 10AM - KLAMATH
JAN 21 - COUNCIL ACTION MTG. - 10AM - WEITCHPEC
JAN 25 - COUNCIL FINANCE MTG. - 10AM - KLAMATH



**Orick District Representative
Larry Hendrix begins his
eighth term on the
Yurok Tribal Council**