



Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

Volunteers go big at Clean Up

51,740 pounds of trash removed during annual event - See story on page 3





MARCH 2018 PUBLIC NOTICES



ELECTION NOTICE

TO ALL YUROK TRIBAL MEMBERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO RUN FOR THE FOLLOWING SEATS:

CHAIRPERSON, VICE-CHAIRPERSON and ORICK DISTRICT.

Any Yurok Tribal members that are interested in running for Election as a Representative for the Yurok Tribal Council may pick up nomination papers in person beginning June 18, 2018, at the Yurok Tribal Office in Klamath. All Candidates must be 25 years of age for a district seat and 30 years of age for Chair and Vice-Chair, as of October 10, 2018.

There is a \$105 filing fee due when you pick up the Nomination forms and background check packet at the Klamath Office in Person. A Live Scan will also be done at the time you turn in your background check packet.

The Nomination Period closes July 20, 2018.

For More Information, Please call the Election Office at (707) 482-1350.

2018 ELECTION SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 10, 2018 PRIMARY ELECTION
NOVEMBER 7, 2018 RUNOFF ELECTION
JUNE 18 - (8:30AM) FIRST DAY TO ISSUE NOMINATION PAPERS FOR COUNCIL OFFICE
JULY 16 - (5:00PM) LAST DAY TO REGISTER WHEN MOVING INTO A DIFFERENT DISTRICT (90 DAYS)
JULY 20 - (5:00PM) LAST DAY TO FILE NOMINATION PAPERS
AUGUST 10 - (5:00PM) LAST DAY TO FILE INITIATIVE(S)
AUGUST 10 - PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF ELECTION (60 DAYS)
AUGUST 17 - (5:00PM) LAST DAY TO RECEIVE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS FOR THE SAMPLE BALLOT (250 words) AND NEWSLETTER (750 words)
AUGUST 24 - LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR PRIMARY ELECTION (47 DAYS)
AUGUST 27- 29 ELECTION BOARD CERTIFICATION OF NEW REGISTRANTS
AUGUST 31 - MAIL OUT SAMPLE BALLOTS TO REGISTERED VOTERS (40 DAYS)
SEPTEMBER 7 - MAILING OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS (32 DAYS)
SEPTEMBER 28 - LAST DAY TO RECEIVE ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST BY MAIL (14 DAYS)
OCTOBER 9 - LAST DAY TO PICK UP ABSENTEE BALLOT IN OFFICE (1 DAY)
OCTOBER 10 - PRIMARY ELECTION
OCTOBER 26 - LAST DAY TO RECEIVE ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST BY MAIL FOR RUN OFF (14 DAYS) ONLY IF YOU DID NOT REQUEST AN ABSENTEE FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION
OCTOBER 19 - MAILING OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS FOR RUN OFF (19 DAYS)
NOVEMBER 6 - LAST DAY TO PICK UP ABSENTEE BALLOT IN OFFICE FOR RUN OFF (1 DAY)
NOVEMBER 7, 2018 RUNOFF ELECTION



30 Day PUBLIC NOTICE RECOMMENDATION FOR YUROK TRIBE RESIDENTIAL LAND ASSIGNMENT PUBLIC NOTICE TO ALL TRIBAL MEMBERS

The following Tribal Members have applied for a Land Assignment on the Yurok Reservation. Any Tribal Member wishing to comment on the following land assignment application may submit written comments to the Yurok Tribe's Planning & Community Development Department. All comments must be in writing and include the name, address and signature of the person making the comments. Comments must specify which land assignment they are addressing and must be received by the Planning Department by July 1, 2018. If you have any questions please call Samantha Myers at (707) 482-1350 ext. 1361.

- (Category B) Transfer of an existing assignment:Lineal Descendant (Daughter) Laura Borden: Prior Assignee (Sylvia Amos Carroll), Yurok Tribe # NCK-008 BIA # HRP-529 APN:532-142-005 Located in Notchko Village.

Submit all written comments by the above deadline to the following address:

Attention: Samantha Myers
Planning & Community Development Department
P.O. Box 1027
Klamath, CA 95548

UIHS has new website

Check out the new UIHS website at <http://unitedindianhealthservices.org/>. We have updated our online presence and invite you to explore the cyber realm of our clinic. You can find out what services are available by department and can even access employment information. You can download forms and there is a link to contact us.<http://unitedindianhealthservices.org/compliment-ease-your-burden/>.

One of the features of the website is the Patient Portal. The Portal is designed to allow to access your files and set up appointments. You can also sign up for the free UIHS newsletter "The Acorn Basket" via the website.

You can also stay up to date electronically with the new site. Our calendar is posted online noting upcoming events and activities. Come back often to keep track of what is going on in the world of UIHS.

Contents

- Page 5.....Tribes defends court decision
- Page 8.....Klamath Clean Up photo spread
- Page 10.....2018 Spring Yurok TREX

On The Cover

Kayah Ray was one of the approximately 200 volunteers, who braved the rain to participate in the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's 17th Annual Klamath River Clean Up.

Hundreds enjoy 17th Klamath Clean Up

Drizzle doesn't deter volunteers at events in Klamath and Weitchpec

Despite the persistent drizzle, approximately 200 people made it out for the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's 17th Annual Klamath River Clean Up.

The volunteers removed from sites in Klamath and Weitchpec two 40-yard containers and two 20-yard containers worth of trash, totaling 51,740 pounds, as well as 25 old mattresses. Also, a truckload of invasive scotch broom was eradicated from the banks of the beautiful Klamath River.

"We sincerely appreciate all of the volunteers who made it out to Weitchpec and Klamath," said Louisa McCovey, who is YTEP's Director and a Yurok Tribal member. "Every year, we are seeing less trash and that is testament to the community's commitment to restoring the Klamath."

The primary purpose of the annual event is to restore the river to a more natural state for native fish and wildlife.

Much of the debris originates from the simple fact that the Yurok Reservation is at the terminal end of the massive river. Any litter that makes it into the waterway flows downstream. Also, a few unscrupulous people dump their household refuse in the secluded, forested area surrounding the river.

In recent years, YTEP has implemented several, successful measures to curb unlawful waste deposits, such as limiting access to certain areas, making it more convenient to send trash to the county dump and educating individuals about the harm that this activity has on salmon, native mammals and birds. In addition to being unsightly and damaging to the river's health, illegally dumped materials contaminate animals' food and water sources. These toxins pose a threat to cultural resources and have

the potential to work their way into community drinking water systems, too.

YTEP and the Watershed Stewards Program, a co-organizer of the event, worked alongside volunteers at both of the sites, extracting solid waste and noxious weeds from the sensitive riparian habitat adjacent to communal river bars on the Yurok Reservation.

"In one day, we made a significant improvement to fish and wildlife habitat along the Klamath River," said Koiya Tuttle, YTEP's Assistant Director and Yurok Tribal member. "The volunteers should be proud of the work they accomplished."

Every year, the Clean Up receives a tremendous amount of support from numerous local individuals and businesses. YTEP would like to acknowledge their generosity and ongoing support of the event.

"To all of these community members and environmentally conscious companies, YTEP

would like offer our genuine gratitude," concluded YTEP Director McCovey.

2018 Klamath Clean Up donors include:

Abby Abinanti
Amerigas
A & L Feed Supply
Ace Hardware
Alme Allen
Arlin Charles Jr.
Back Country Bicycles
Beau Pre Golf Course



Photo Courtesy of Rich and Jamie Holt
(Left) Elizabeth Azzuz and Annelia Hillman removed a tire from the banks of the Klamath River.

Bed Bath & Beyond
 Blue Lake Casino & Hotel
 Brio Beadworks
 Cafe Mokka
 California auto Image
 Carquest Auto Parts
 Coast Central Credit Union
 Costco
 Curry Equipment
 Del Norte Office Supply
 Del Norte Tire
 Elk Valley Rancheria
 Englund Marine & Industrial Supply
 Eureka Books
 Eureka Natural Foods
 Far North Climbing
 Frank Tuttle
 Grocery Outlet
 Hambro WSG, Inc.
 Harmony Cafe

HealthSPORT
 Hemmingson Construction Inc.
 Holly Yashi
 Home Depot
 Jitter Bean Coffee Co.
 Jury's Nursery and Gifts
 Kier & Associates
 Les Schwab Tires
 Life Fitness
 Los Bagels
 McMullians Mills
 Ming Tree
 Moonrise Herbs
 NCIDC
 North Coast Co-op
 Northtown Coffee
 Ocean World
 Old Town Coffee & Chocolates
 Papa Murphy's
 Paul's Famous Smoked Salmon Jerky

Ramone's Bakery and Cafe
 Rays Food Place
 Rumiano Cheese Company
 Sacred Geometrix
 Safeway
 San Francisco Giants
 Six Degrees of Celebration
 Starbucks
 Stillwater Sciences
 The Bead Lady
 The Home Depot Crescent City
 The Mill Yard
 The Pizza Factory
 Tri Counties Bank
 Ultimate Yogurt
 Wild Rivers Market
 W.N. Tetrault
 Yurok Tribe Executive Office ✨

• Please see photo spread on page 8

YTEP earns award for Klamath Clean Up

Accolade given to those who promote natural resource conservation

The Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's premier natural resource protection work was recently acknowledged in the form of an award.

Earlier this spring, the Del Norte Solid Waste Authority's Director Tedd Ward bestowed YTEP with a Green Ribbon Award for its annual Klamath River Clean Up. YTEP's Director, Louisa McCovey, accompanied by Assistant Director Koiya Tuttle, both of whom are Yurok Tribal members, accepted the award, in the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors chambers, on behalf of the program. YTEP has now earned multiple accolades for its natural resource protection and preservation projects.

"I am honored to receive this award on behalf of our excellent staff," said Louisa McCovey, the Director of the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program. "I would like to thank the Del Norte Solid Waste Authority for its recognition of the Klamath River Clean Up. Every year, the whole YTEP crew works really hard to make it a great community event."

The Klamath Clean Up, now in its 17th year, aims to return to a more natural state the sensitive riparian habitat along the river,



Louisa McCovey and Koiya Tuttle, YTEP's Director and Assistant Director, accept the Green Ribbon Award on behalf of the department.

where dozens of plant and wildlife species reside. This year's clean up drew about 200 volunteers, who removed trash and

invasive plants from the banks of the Klamath.

Annually, the Solid Waste Authority gives out the Green Ribbon Award to individuals, groups and businesses that are working to promote natural resource conservation by reducing local waste and recycling.

The Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's mission is to protect the lands, air and water resources of the Yurok Reservation for the benefit of current and future generations of tribal members. YTEP staff utilize science, traditional knowledge and environmental regulation for the purposes of enhancing tribal sovereignty and expanding environmental regulatory authority of the Tribe to promote and protect these resources within the Yurok Reservation.

The Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority, a Klamath Clean Up sponsor, is a joint powers authority formed by the City of Crescent City and the County of Del Norte in 1992 to administer and manage all solid waste, recycling, composting, and household hazardous waste facilities, services, and programs throughout Del Norte County, California. ✨



The Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's Klamath River Clean Up is now in its 17th year.

Tribe prevails in Klamath court case

Federal magistrate denies irrigators' motion to reduce flows

SAN FRANCISCO — In the face of another tough water year for California and Oregon, threatened coho salmon in the Klamath River will have much better survival chances in 2018, thanks to a recent decision in U.S. District Court upholding an injunction entered last year.

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and irrigation districts requested that the Court allow them to forgo the Klamath River flows required by the injunction, which would flush out deadly parasites that infect juvenile salmon. One flow at issue, the “flushing flow,” has already occurred as required by the injunction, in the days preceding the hearing, and will help prevent the risk of infection for salmon.

Judge William H. Orrick found that, in addition to the flushing flows, the BOR must comply with all of the elements of the injunction and set aside water for an “emergency dilution flow” to protect salmon in the event of another largescale disease outbreak.

“For the Yurok people, there is nothing more important than the Klamath salmon,” said Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr., the Chairman

of the Yurok Tribe. “Our fish are an essential part of our way of life and right now, because of the current drought, they are vulnerable to crisis-level disease rates.”

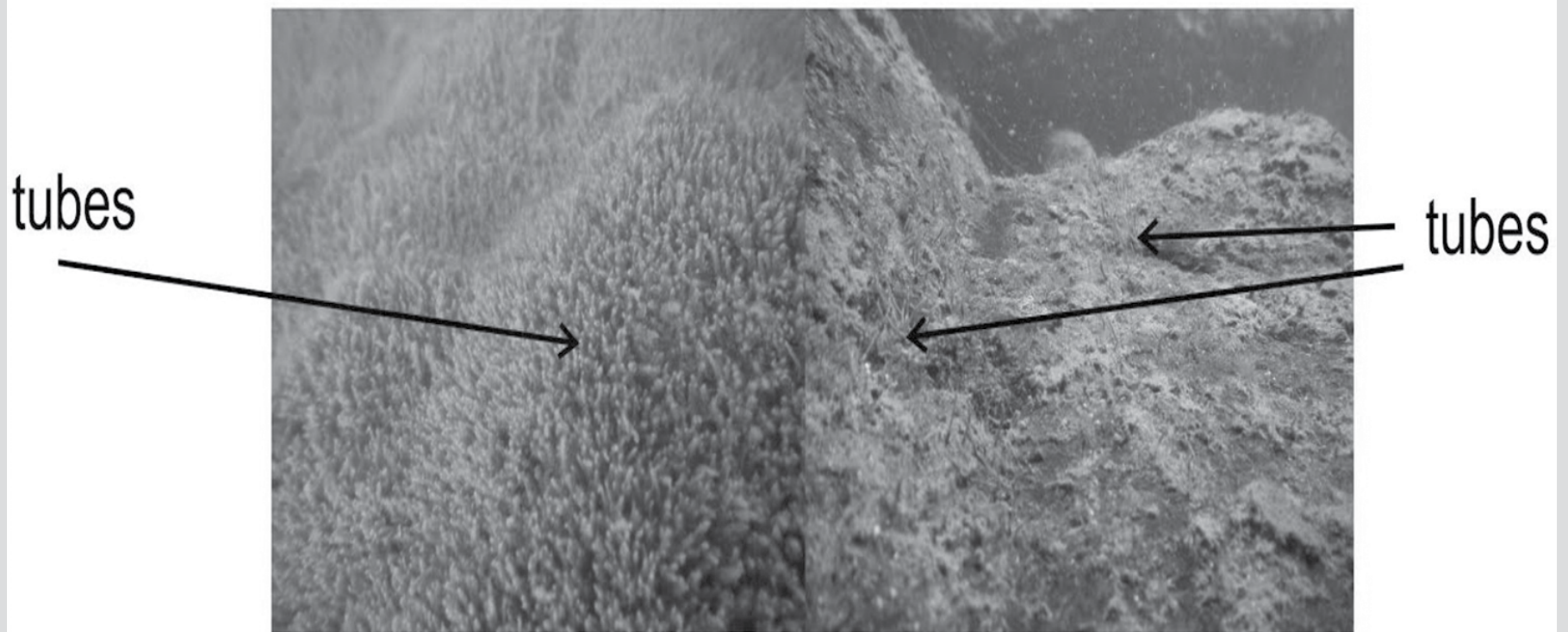
“This ruling gives salmon a chance at survival, and prevents conditions like those that caused horrific disease outbreaks in past years leading up to this lawsuit,” said Patti Goldman, the Earthjustice attorney arguing on behalf of Klamath Riverkeeper and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations. “This class year of salmon are already in a precarious state and need the water, to survive and to avoid another catastrophe.”

The challenges that Klamath River salmon face ripple throughout the Klamath Basin. Recent years have been especially difficult for the Yurok Tribe. The Tribal Council voted not to have commercial fishing seasons in 2016 or 2017, and even forbade subsistence fishing in 2017 due to low salmon numbers. It was the first year since time immemorial that the Yurok Tribe has not fished for salmon.

For Dave Bitts, President of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen’s Associations, it is more proof of the need for all sides

2014

2016



Graphic courtesy of USFWS Arcata

On the left is a picture, taken during the drought in 2014, of polychaete colonies on a specific rock in the Klamath River. The image on the right is of the same rock and was taken in 2016 following a deep flushing flow of 11,250 cfs. Notice the absence of the polychaetes. During a part of its complex lifecycle, *C. Shasta* uses this worm species as its host.

to work together in a region where scarce water resources have been over-allocated for years.

“It’s a real challenge. I think we have a better chance of meeting it if we work cooperatively than if we’re fighting each other in court all the time,” Bitts said.

“If we don’t make the choice now to be more sustainable, we’re going to be forced to – so, we might as well start planning how we’re going to do that now,” added Klamath Riverkeeper Interim Director Amanda Ford. “I think what’s happening, especially in the upper Klamath Basin, is a really good chance to do that. Getting along doesn’t necessarily mean we all agree on everything. It means that we respect each other enough to not damage the place our future

generations are going to live.”

In the weeks following the ruling, juvenile Klamath salmon experienced a spike in *C. Shasta* infection rates. On the morning of Monday, May 7, the BOR began releasing the emergency, increased flows. The Klamath was ramped up to between 3,000 and 4,000 cfs to dilute the number of disease spores in the river.

“In every decision we make, we consider what it will mean for our fish and for our people several generations into the future. We asked the court and the BOR to take the same approach to prudently managing the Klamath River, the lifeline of the Yurok people,” concluded Chairman O’Rourke. ✱

“IN EVERY DECISION WE MAKE, WE CONSIDER WHAT IT WILL MEAN FOR OUR FISH AND FOR OUR PEOPLE SEVERAL GENERATIONS INTO THE FUTURE.”

Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr., Chairman of the Yurok Tribe

YUROK LANGUAGE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



BESSIE SHORTY

The Yurok Language Program would like to recognize this month's "Teacher Candidate Spotlight", Bessie Shorty, for her continued effort and success in the Kee Laa-yo-lue-mehl "They Will Teach" Yurok Language Teacher Program.

The Program started in February 2017 with 10 Teacher Candidates who are responsible for completing a dual track to earn both their Level 3 Yurok

language Teaching Credential and their Bachelor's Degree (or higher) with state teaching credentials through the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

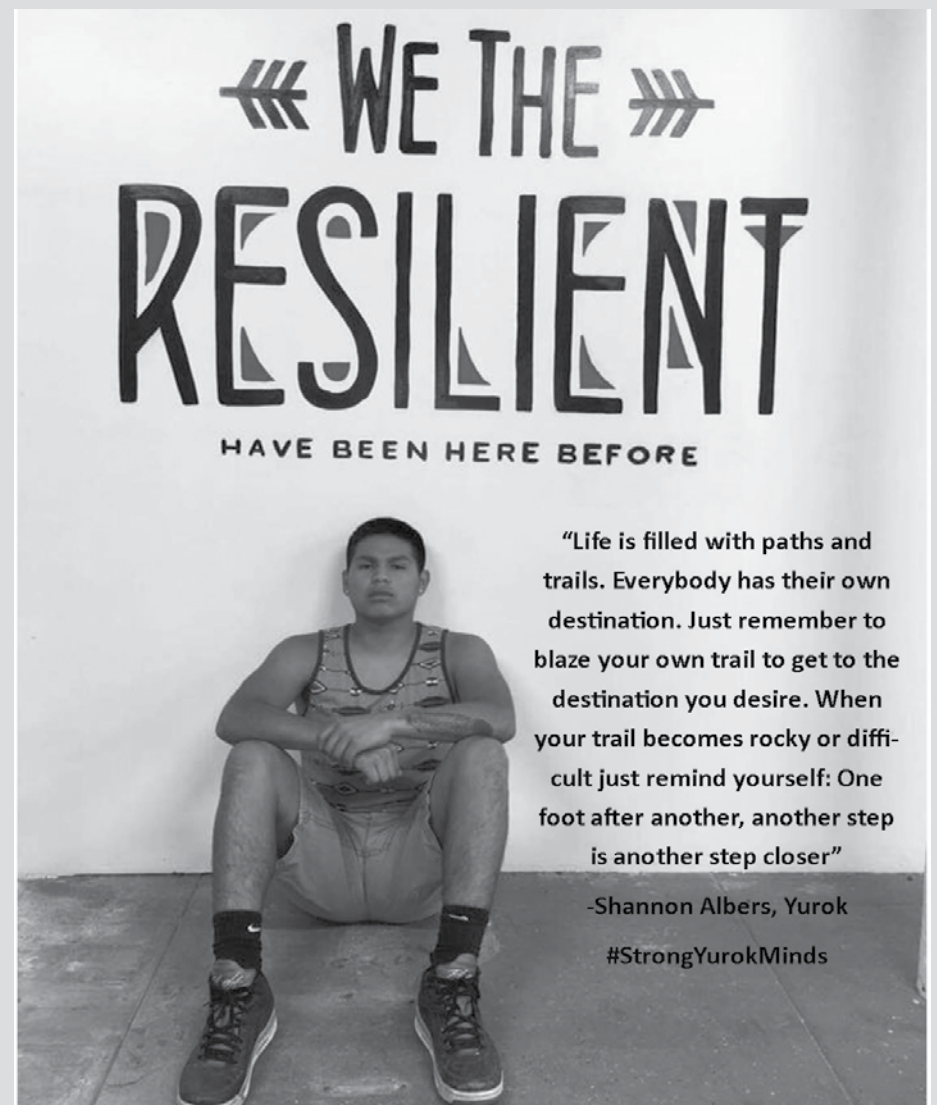
In Year 1 of the program, Bessie worked hard to complete all activities, but in Year 2, she has gone above and beyond to finish all activities well ahead of schedule! These activities included: 10 immersion pods, monthly grammar workshops, attendance at the eight-day Yurok Language Summer Institute and the four-day Immersion Camp, classroom observations, teacher development trainings, pre- and post-assessments, monthly check-ins with YLP staff, submittal of paperwork like monthly attendance verifications for each of her classes, course schedules, and final grades. The completion of these requirements demands hard work, persistence, commitment to her academic goals, and dedication to improving her language skills.

Throughout the program, Bessie has remained in excellent communication. She is extremely responsive and completes any tasks asked of her with diligence and absolute professionalism. Bessie often schedules out activities months in advance to ensure their completion and to make sure that all of her responsibilities in the Kee Laa-yo-lue-mehl Program, at home, at school, and at work are each handled with the same degree of commitment and thoroughness. Outside of our program, she works a full-time job as a Grant Writer for the Yurok Tribe. She has made a great time commitment to completing her language and educational goals while also advancing her career. She is driven, hard-working, and considerate in all that she does. She is more than willing to ask questions and take responsibility to ensure the success of any project with which she is involved and always

keeps the wellness and health of all Native People in mind.

Bessie currently holds an Associate's Degree and she has been dedicated to improving her language skills while completing a secondary A.A. in Early Childhood Education while simultaneously working toward her Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education (with a concentration in Trauma Studies) through Pacific Oaks. This grueling schedule requires that Bessie stay up and complete coursework and language development late into the night and through the weekends. She has balanced this schedule with grace and, again, with the utmost professionalism.

Her work has paid off and she will soon be eligible for recommendation to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing as a Yurok Language Teacher! Congratulations, Bessie, on your continued success in our program and in any future endeavors!





THE 2018 CLEAN UP RESULTED IN THE R



REMOVAL OF 51,740 POUNDS OF TRASH



Yurok wrestler shooting for the gold

Demetrius Gensaw won seven tournaments during the 2018 season

In Folk Style Wrestling, Yurok Tribal member Demetrius Gensaw has found his passion.

The 13-year-old, Burney Youth Wrestling team standout has dedicated his entire life to becoming the best possible student-athlete. He is constantly in the weight room, on the track or on

the mat trying to sharpen his skills.

As a result of his solid work ethic and his decision to trade comfort for a supremely strong body, he took seven first place finishes in 2018. Even though the season just ended, the 104-pounder is not taking a break from his rigorous training routine. He puts so much energy into improving his aptitude for grappling because he has big goals in the sport.

“It is my dream to go to the Olympics,” Gensaw said. “I want to wrestle people from different countries and travel the world.”

Despite the fact that Gensaw only started wrestling this year, the Yurok boy is committed to doing whatever it takes to achieve this objective.

“I know working harder than everyone else is the only way to make it to the Olympic team,” he said.

Gensaw enjoys the pressure of competition, overcoming adversity and achieving the remarkable degree of physical fitness that is required to compete at the highest level. The individual nature of the sport is also one of the facets that attracted him to the sport of grappling.

The hardworking teen joined the Burney Wrestling team after his uncle, Leo Gensaw, repeatedly encouraged him to give it try.

“Wrestling is fun. It’s on you to succeed because it’s not a team sport,” he said.

At the beginning of the season, Gensaw took a few losses, as would be expected from a green grappler. The less than desirable outcomes ignited a fire inside him to enhance his

abilities in every aspect of the complex athletic endeavor, but it wasn’t easy.

The lessons he learned from coming up short helped him become a strong competitor. Shortly after the season began, he started to see the fruits of his labor and went on to win seven consecutive tournaments, an accomplishment he attributes to dedication and hard work in the practice room.

“It taught me humility,” Gensaw explained. “At first, I hated to lose and threw a tantrum, but I came to understand that I just need to try my best and have good sportsmanship.”

Many wrestlers, regardless of age, are intimidated by opponents who have more experience. This did not hinder Gensaw, who handily beat numerous people who have spent several years competing on the mat.

“When I’m about to wrestle in a match, I don’t think about what my opponent is going to do. I think about what I’m going to do and how I’m going to do it,” he said. “The other kids don’t give me too many problems.”

Out of all of the sports available to middle-school-aged youth, wrestling is discernably the most physically and mentally demanding. Before the Reno Rumble winner’s first wrestling



Every day, Demetrius Gensaw works on improving his wrestling skills, physical stamina and strength.

practice, Gensaw admits that he was “not really fit.” Today, he is 5’1 beast of a boy, who is brimming with confidence. At the same time, he is a sincerely respectful boy, who is on the path to becoming a preeminently respectable young man. His winning record is a reflection of the amazing amount of effort that he puts into building up the strength and stamina needed to best all of his opponents.

“On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most in shape, I am a ten,” he said without even the slightest bit of braggadocios.

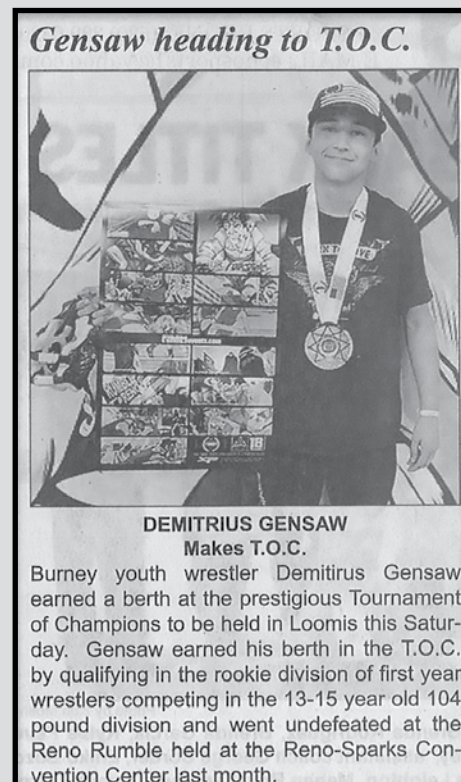
His mother Victoria and Aunt Karena Gensaw-Chapman, as well as his sisters Simone and Lomita, are his biggest fans. His Mom takes him to all of his events and his family cheers him on from the stands.

“My Mom takes me to all of my meets and is very supportive of my participation in wrestling,” Gensaw said.

In the future, Gensaw plans on wrestling in high school and then in college, which he hopes will help him obtain a spot on the US Olympic team. He doesn’t have any hobbies. Aside from his schoolwork, everything he does is related to becoming a superior wrestler. Almost every day he runs three miles and hits the weight room for hours a time.

“I don’t do anything besides wrestling,” Gensaw said. “I am always trying to better myself.”

Gensaw was recently featured in his local newspaper. Please see the clip to the right. ☆



Yurok artists contribute to installation

Yurok Planning Department oversees new phase of the Klamath Gateway project

This month, the Yurok Tribe’s Watershed Restoration Department installed a series of steel silhouettes, depicting traditional themes and resources, at two locations on Klamath Boulevard.

Hop Norris, a talented Yurok artist and owner of Bear Island Designs, created the original artwork that was used to make the one-of-a-kind steel cutouts of a canoe paddler and native animals. One of which was placed in front of the Yurok Country Visitor Center and the other in front of the Redwood Hotel and Casino.

The art installation is part of the Klamath Blvd. Gateway Project, a larger initiative led by the Yurok Planning and Community Development and Transportation Departments, which aims to upgrade the aesthetics on the Yurok Reservation’s main street in a culturally appropriate manner. The multifaceted project is representative of the Tribe’s rich heritage, strong cultural identity and sovereignty.

“Yurok people are responsible for creating all of the art installations in Klamath,” said Josh Norris, a Planner with the Planning Department and Yurok Tribal member. “This project

has roots in our village lifeway. Yurok People have always been widely recognized for our ability to create fine art and it has always been an integral part of our upbringing. Elaborate artistic elements are embedded into everything from our basket caps to more utilitarian items, such as eel hooks and elk horn purses.”

This project represents the most significant public infrastructure improvement endeavor, since the town of Klamath was hastily rebuilt following the catastrophic flood in 1964, which wiped out most of the town.

To date, artistic renditions of traditional redwood stools and redwood benches have been installed on Klamath Boulevard. Alme Allen, another highly skilled Yurok artist, designed and oversaw the placement of both forms of seating. New solar-powered street lights now line a recently constructed foot path on the boulevard. Banners adorned with representations of Yurok cultural themes hang from the light poles. Carl Avery, an amazing graphic artist and Tribal member, produced the incredible illustrations. The mural in the foyer at the Klamath office, created by local youth, is a result of this



project too.

Soon, five murals, which Hop Norris painted, will be also displayed on Klamath Boulevard. Norris worked with twelve school-aged children to develop the the themes of rivers, forests and cultural values. Annelia Hillman, another accomplished Yurok artist, ornately painted recycling bins, which will also be distributed along the street.

The Ink People, a Eureka-based arts and culture organization, facilitated the acquisition of the artwork and has been instrumental in this project.

This ongoing project received funding from the National Endowment of the Arts Our Town grant. The Yurok Planning and Community Development and Transportation Departments secured the award on behalf of the Tribe and are collaborating on its administration. ❄



Fire Council draws many to training

The Culture Fire Mgmt. Council is implementing the community's fire vision

The prolific, positive results produced by the Cultural Fire Management Council's calculated forest and prairie burning practices have drawn numerous fire agencies, from near and far, to the organization's biannual Yurok Training Exchanges (TRES).

Every spring and fall, the CFMC facilitates two week-long burn trainings, which attract firefighters from Southern California to Southern Oregon and even Europe. During the hands-on fire lighter workshops individuals learn how to safely implement low to moderate intensity burns in biologically diverse areas on the Yurok Reservation. The CFMC and its partners recently completed the 2018 Spring Yurok TRES. Thirty-two firefighters from 10 different organizations, including individuals from the Yurok Wildland Fire Department, the neighboring Karuk Tribe, The Nature Conservancy and Cal Fire participated in the skill building exercise. Under the supervision of a veteran burn boss, the trainees used fire to treat multiple hazel-filled forests and create a fire barrier around a Tribal elder's home.

"The Spring burn was amazing! We burned 30 acres, including one home protection unit and in areas that had a lot of hazel," said Margo Robbins, the CFMC's President, Yurok Tribal member and traditional basket weaver. "Hazel needs fire to generate new shoots, and these new shoots are what is needed to continue the ancient art of basket weaving in Yurok country."

In addition to building fire lines, working with drip torches and using specialized equipment to determine current weather conditions, tribal experts taught TRES participants, who range from new to high ranking firefighters, about the present day and historical use of prescribed fire on Yurok lands. The group gained experience in using various firing techniques in multiple types of environments. The novice trainees walked away with a better understanding of the following: holding, mop up, safety protocols, and fire line communication. Each are now qualified to apply for professional firefighting positions, whether it's within a Tribal department or any other outfit in the US. The more accomplished trainees were able to enhance their qualifications, making them eligible for increases in pay and rank.

During this year's Spring TRES the Incident Commander and Burn Boss was a long-serving firefighter named Amanda Stamper, who is a strong proponent of prescribed burning and dynamic leader from The Nature Conservancy in Oregon.



CFMC President Margo Robbins ignites a burn on Highway 169.

"Amanda did an absolutely amazing job with our crew," said Elizabeth Azzuz, the CFMC administrator, and logistics lead for the training. "We were so happy to have her as our burn boss. I learned more from her during that week than I have during all of the previous years."

Stamper equally enjoyed her time in Yurok Country.

"I have long wanted to come to the Klamath to learn from the tribes here about cultural fire, and how it is applied to this landscape to benefit both people and nature. My expectations were beyond surpassed. I was welcomed and brought into the fold of the Cultural Fire Management Council, and learned more than I could have possibly anticipated. I can't wait to come back!"

Within 24 hours of meeting each other, the combined crews formed a cohesive unit with an enormous level of trust and cooperation.

While individuals travel from all over to participate in the Yurok TRES, one of the CFMC's primary objectives is to build up the local capacity, such as within the Yurok Wildland Fire Department, to perform cultural burns on a landscape scale.

"One day soon, we would like to be able to burn from the river to the top of the mountain in the area between Weitchpec and Wautec," said Robbins, as she stood on Highway 169 with smoke

from a controlled fire billowing overhead. “I believe we can accomplish this goal in the not so distant future.”

Cultural burning, a time-honored, based on Traditional Ecological Knowledge approach to natural resource stewardship is proven to protect communities from wildfires, rejuvenate critical wildlife habitat and generate many more benefits. Since time immemorial, the Yurok people have used fire to manage the land, which in turn provided everything from ample food to weaving materials to medicines. The now prevalent unburned prairies and mixed conifer forests yield little to no value to wildlife or human populations. Additionally, the accumulation of fuels, resulting from the paucity of fire, poses a serious threat to reservation residents and their property, a risk the Cultural Fire Management Council is aggressively aiming to address.

The CFMC is working with the state and federal land owners to restore the use for fire within the whole of Yurok Ancestral Territory and beyond. State forest managers recently acknowledged that the Cultural Fire Management Council’s cultural burning practices are the best way to prevent the kinds of catastrophic wildfires that damaged much of Central and Southern California last year.

“People are just starting to recognize that fire is a necessary part of a balanced ecosystem. It has a spirit, it has a purpose,” said CFMC President Margo Robbins. “There is still too much fear surrounding fire, but when people see firsthand what we do, their perspectives changes almost instantly.”

The CFMC was established in 2015, in response to the local community’s concerns about the fuel buildup and the lack of access to once abundant natural resources. In a only few short years, the nonprofit organization’s committed members have created from scratch the human and financial capital necessary to restore a significant portion of the fire-deprived forest and prairie habitats in Yurok territory. Robbins, Azzuz, and a tight-knit group of Weitchpec residents have literally put their seemingly endless creativity, smarts and sweat into the CFMC’s growth. At the same time, they would like to see the CFMC continue to expand because there is still many acres that have not received a curative burn treatment and each of the treated parcels needs a second dose to completely remove invasive species, like scotch broom.

One of the CFMC’s far-term objectives, outlined in the draft Indigenous People’s Burn Network’s (ICPBN) Healthy Country Burn Plan, is to bring back traditional burning to the proportion that it was practiced prior to European contact.



CFMC member Elizabeth Azzuz scouts the fire at the 2018 Spring Yurok TREX.



Amanda Stamper was the Incident Commander and Burn Boss for the Spring TREX.

ICPBN is a coalition comprised of members of the Yurok, Karuk and Hoopa Valley Tribes. The Burn Plan is a document that will be used to guide the future application of fire in the Tribes’ respective territories.

“Two strategies identified in the Healthy Country Plan include establishing a family-led burn program in each tribe/ community, and fostering the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. We are currently working to educate people on how to prepare their land to accept fire, get the proper

permits, and burn their own land safely,” Robbins said. “We are also focusing on teaching the next generation of young people about fire.”

The plan is also deeply rooted in the community’s concern about the loss of wildlife habitat and a multitude of traditional resources, due to the protracted absence of annual, planned fires and past logging practices.

“We are working very hard to turn the community’s vision into reality,” Robbin explained.

In the years after a CFMC burn the production of traditional basket materials, foods and medicines significantly increases. Dozens of mammal and bird species flock to the forest and prairies to take advantage of the new, lush growth, spurred by fire. The reduction in the fuels on the forest floor eliminates the possibility of an out-of-control wildfire. The planned application of fire eradicates acorn and hazelnut pests too.

While the CFMC has accomplished a lot in a short amount of time, the organization’s members would like to smartly scorch more land than they are currently capable of burning. There is a significant need to enhance local food security, fire safety and the availability of the plants employed in basket making. The deer population on the reservation is dismal because, without fire, there is not enough forage to support sufficient numbers. Elk, a former staple, are nearly nonexistent. These are just two of hundreds of cultural resources that Yurok people have difficulty finding or cannot currently access at all. Restoring fire on all of the Tribe’s lands will reverse this trend within a few short years, but that will take more funding.

“There are many needs to be fulfilled in order for us to do landscape level burning. Funding is, of course a priority,” Robbins posited. “Policy change is a necessity, as is education. The government's aggressive approach to fire suppression and negative messaging about fire has instilled a deep fear of fire in many, many people. My hope is that one day we will reach critical mass in terms of people recognizing that fire is as much a part of a balanced ecosystem, as water or oxygen.” ✨

YUROK TRIBE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

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- (2) a Camp Cook for our annual Yurok Language Immersion Camp (which will be held July 26-29),
- (3) a Yurok Language Specialist III (based in the East area – Weitchpec),
- (4) Three Sponsored Participants to attend Yurok Language Institute (in June) and Yurok Language Immersion Camp (in July), and (5) a Yurok Language Teacher Candidate for our Kee Laa-yo-lue-mehl Teacher Program (See graphic on the left).

Applications and further details about any of these positions can be obtained through the Yurok Tribe Language Program. We can be reached by phone (707-482-1350 x 1333), email (b.vigilburbank@gmail.com), social media (Facebook: “Yurok Tribe Language Program”), or drop by our office next the Education office.



Yurok Tribe

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www.yuroktribe.org

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SAVE THE DATES

The 2018 Annual Membership Meeting
is on Saturday, August 4 at 10am in Klamath.

The Klamath Salmon Festival
is on Saturday, August 18, 2018.

