

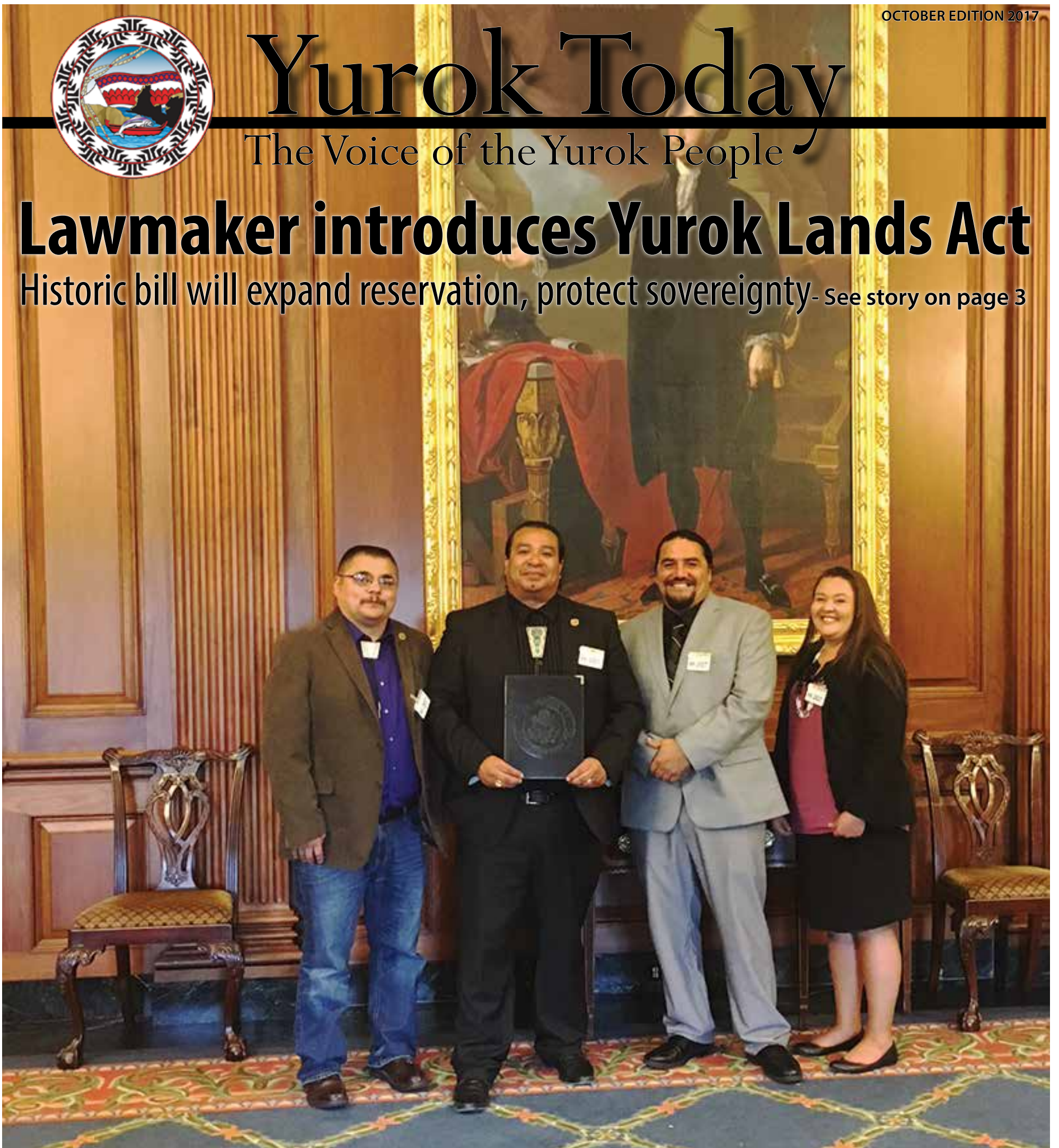


# Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

## Lawmaker introduces Yurok Lands Act

Historic bill will expand reservation, protect sovereignty- See story on page 3



**ELECTION BOARD  
UNOFFICIAL RESULTS  
2017 YUOK PRIMARY ELECTION  
OCTOBER 11, 2017  
NORTH DISTRICT**

<b>Edward Horse Aubrey</b>	<u>102</u>	<b>56.98%</b>
<b>Jack Mattz</b>	<u>77</u>	<b>43.02%</b>

**REQUA DISTRICT**

<b>Ryan P. Ray, Sr.</b>	<u>76</u>	<b>57.58 %</b>
<b>Elise Williams</b>	<u>56</u>	<b>42.42 %</b>

**WEITCHPEC DISTRICT**

<b>Toby Vanlandingham</b>	<u>29</u>	<b>50.88%</b>
<b>Thomas Willson, Sr.</b>	<u>28</u>	<b>49.12%</b>

**The Election Board will meet on October 16, 2017, to certify the Election results. For more information, please contact the Election Department at (707) 482-1350 or email: [kpatapoff@yuroktribe.nsn.us](mailto:kpatapoff@yuroktribe.nsn.us)**



## Important Dates

- October 25 - Council - Planning - 10am - Klamath**
- October 26 - Council - Action - 10am - Weitchpec**
- October 28 - Halloween Carnival - 2pm - Worthington Site
- October 30- Recovery Bound Meeting - 5pm-7pm - Klamath
- October 31 - UIHS Blood Pressure Test -11am-1pm - Klamath
- November 8 - Council - Planning - 10am - Klamath**
- November 9 - Council - Action - 10am - Klamath**
- November 10 - Veteran's Day - All offices closed
- November 14 - Fall Feast - 5pm-7pm - Klamath
- November 15 - Fall Feast - 5pm-7pm - Worthington
- November 16 - Fall Feast - 5pm-7pm - Weitchpec
- November 29-30 - VAWA Conference - Klamath

## Tribal Court Notice

YTCV 2017 – 070 And YTCV 2017 - 071

**TO:** Unknown Tribal Member  
**A Complaint of a Violation of the Fishing Rights Ordinance (un-marked net) has been filed by:**  
 Office of Tribal Attorney, in the Yurok Tribal Court.  
 The hearing will be held in the court as follows:  
 Thursday, December 14, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.  
 Court Address: 230 Klamath Boulevard, Klamath, CA 95548  
 If **you object** to the forfeiture of this net, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections. Your appearance must be in person.  
**You may receive a copy of the Complaint.** To do so, please contact the Office of Tribal Attorney whose address is listed below.

Attorney for the Petitioner:  
 Office of Tribal Attorney  
 Yurok Tribe  
 190 Klamath Boulevard  
 Klamath, CA 95548  
 (707) 482-1350

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## On The Cover

*(left) Yurok Tribal Council Rep. Joe James, Office of Self Governance Director Javier Kinney, Requa Rep. Ryan Ray and Pecwan Rep. Mindy Natt travelled to Washington DC for the introduction of the Yurok Lands Act and to advocate on behalf of the Yurok people. Photo Courtesy of Javier Kinney*

# Council reps travel to DC for historic bill

*If passed, Yurok Act will increase size of reservation and more*

Washington, D.C.- Congressman Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) introduced the Yurok Lands Act, a pivotal piece of legislation that aims to strengthen self-governance and sovereignty, and improve tribal infrastructure.

“The Yurok Tribe would like to sincerely thank Congressman Huffman for his commitment to serving all residents of the North Coast,” said Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr., Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “This bill serves to support our independence and continued success as a thriving Tribal nation.”

“The revised Yurok Lands Act will help to realize past commitments made by Congress to the Yurok Tribe,” said Rep. Huffman. “The legislation will provide a reservation that serves the tribe’s interests, and give the tribe a role in land management decisions that affect the tribe. The legislation strikes a careful balance to resolve longstanding management challenges: meeting many of the Yurok’s objectives, while preserving the rights of neighboring tribes and local interests.”

## **The Yurok Lands Act Accomplished the following:**

- Transfers 1,229 acres of U.S. Forest Service land known as the Yurok Experimental Forest into trust for the tribe
  - Redraws the reservation boundary line to encompass the Yurok Experimental Forest, recently purchased fee land and a U.S. Forest Service property in proximity to the Blue Creek watershed, one of the Tribe’s most sacred areas
  - Positions the Yurok Tribe to directly participate in federal land management decisions within the revised Yurok Reservation.
  - Mandates federal land management agencies to consult with the tribe before major actions on federal land that may affect the amended Yurok Reservation boundary
  - Affirms the Yurok’s governing documents to strengthen tribal governance and sovereignty
  - Preserves the rights of neighboring tribes and local interests by ensuring there is no delegation of federal authority to the Yurok beyond the expanded reservation, and specifying that nothing in it affects any other federally recognized tribe
- The Yurok Lands Act is cosponsored by Reps. Norma Torres (D-CA) and Tom Cole (R-OK). ✨



(Left to right) Office of Self Governance Director Javier Kinney, Requa Rep. Ryan Ray, Chairman Thomas P. O’Rourke Sr. and Pecwan Rep. Mindy Natt travelled to Washington DC for the bill’s introduction.

# CFMC facilitates biannual Yurok TRES

*Training aims to teach locals how to use fire in a traditional way*

The Cultural Fire Management Council completed the Yurok Training Exchange in early October.

The biannual burn training seeks to teach participants how to safely use fire as a natural resource management tool and as a means of reducing dangerous forest fuel loads surrounding the eastern part of the Yurok Reservation. The Yurok TRES also aims to assist local firefighters, whether they are novices or seasoned vets, in developing a greater set of skills, which can be applied to prescribed burns and actual forest fires.

“The TRES provides local people with hands-on experience using fire as a tool to improve habitat for wildlife, reduce hazardous fuel loads in the forest and promote a healthy ecosystem,” said Margo Robbins, CFMC President and Yurok Tribal member. “These controlled fires promote the production of natural foods, medicines and basket materials, too.”

In the past five years, Yurok TRES participants have performed cultural burns on hundreds of acres of forest and prairie lands in Yurok ancestral territory. Numerous native animals, such as deer, bear and even mountain lions, have been spending a significant amount of time in these fire-treated parcels, whereas before they were a rare sight. Traditional weavers have reported an increase in the availability of hazel sticks, a previously scarce resource that is used to make baby baskets. Also, many local families now have a significant amount of defensible space, from wild fires, surrounding their homes because of the TRES.

This year, TRES trainees burned around elders homes, in dense hazel patches and along Highway 169, as well as other locations.

The week-long, skill-building exercise provided all participants with exceptional cultural burning experience, under a variety of conditions and increased local capacity to perform this important land management activity.

The TRES received support from within and outside of the local community. Fire fighters from the following organizations contributed: Yurok Wildland Fire Department, Nature Conservancy Fire Learning Network, Terra Fuego Resource Foundation, Firestorm Inc., Wood’s Fire and Emergency Services and Cal Fire. Patti Cakes and Treats, owned by Yurok Tribal member Patti McCovey provided catering services for the week.

“Every meal was amazing,” said Elizabeth Azzuz, a CFMC and Yurok Tribal member. “The firefighters had smiles, ear-to-ear, every



**Yurok Wildland Firefighter Andy Lamebear, a Yurok Tribal member, broadcasts fire around Tribal members' homes to protect them from an out of control conflagration.**



**The CFMC's Elizabeth Azzuz (center) works tirelessly to bring traditional burning practices back to Yurok Ancestral Territory.**

time they sat down to eat.”

The intensive training was open to wildland fire personnel, including federal, state, Tribal and non-governmental agencies,



**Yurok Tribal member Rick O'Rourke patrols the fire's edge.**

private practitioners and university faculty and students. Trainees, under the supervision of professional firefighters, obtained real-life experience in the following: preparing fire containment lines, scouting, using weather-reading instruments, fire line leadership skills ignition, mop-up, patrolling the fire line, as well as pre and post-fire monitoring.

Paul Aubrey, the Yurok Wildland Fire Department's newest fire fighter, thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. Aubrey, who went to fire school in Southern California, was grateful for the opportunity to assist the local community.

"I'm happy to use what I learned in fire school and in this training to help wildlife and people," he said.

To date, there have been zero fire escapes or even significant firefighter injuries associated with the Yurok TREX.

**The mission of CFMC is to facilitate the practice of cultural burning on the Yurok Reservation and Ancestral lands, leading to a healthier ecosystem for all plants and animals, long term fire protection for residents, and provide basket weaving materials to weavers that will in turn be a platform for restoration of a Yurok cultural life way. ✨**

To Whom It May Concern:

We would like to thank the Yurok Tribe for the 2017 NCIDC Storm Crew program. As elders, this program is very appreciated and needed which ensured a safe and clean protection barrier around our home.

We would also like to give our thanks and recognition to the five person NCIDC Storm Crew that tirelessly labored to clear the surrounding brush from around our home. Tommy Willson Jr, Herman Quinn, Harold Myers, Vernon Peters and Frank Henry Jr. They should be commended for their hard work, professionalism and dedication to this program. They worked tirelessly and impressively on our steep hillside showing, resilience and commitment in what they did. The results were nothing less than outstanding.

Once again, we would like to extend our gratitude to the 2017 Storm Crew and the Yurok Tribe for seeing the need for such a valuable program.



Sincerely,

Harlan and Judy Alvarado



**Pem-Mey is offering gift cards that come with a \$.05 discount loyalty on fuel purchases. Tribal members can include this with the normal discount for additional savings!**

# Yurok Connect improves service in Glen

## *Yurok staff overcomes major obstacles during internet project*

The Yurok Information Services team is in the testing phase on an ambitious project to bring for the very first time high-speed, Yurok Connect internet service to the community of Klamath Glen.

“I am ecstatic that we are so close to offering a quality internet product in the Glen,” said Duston Offins, the Yurok Tribe’s Broadband Manager and Tribal member, who oversaw the endeavor and participated directly in its development.

Klamath Glen, a subdivision tucked behind a tall ridge, is home to numerous Yurok and non-Tribal families. Previously, the seemingly signal-blocking geography prohibited residents from receiving the same fast internet enjoyed by other local consumers, but now they do because of the Yurok Connect team’s tenacity and capacity for implementing complex projects. In addition to providing download speeds similar to what is offered in the town of Klamath, overcoming this obstacle has already attracted 31 prospective Yurok Connect patrons.

Yurok Connect, owned and operated by the Yurok Tribe, provides broadband internet to individuals, Tribal offices as well as Tribally owned and private businesses on the Yurok Reservation and adjacent lands. The Yurok Information Services Dept., under the direction of the Yurok Tribal Council and Director Paul Romero, designed and constructed the entire, sophisticated system, which delivers internet services that are not dissimilar to those in Eureka and Crescent City.

The entire Yurok Connect staff, comprised of Offins, Romero, Assistant Director Jim Norton and Broadband Technician Walter Hoffman all contributed to the recent effort to expand internet coverage and speeds in Klamath Glen.

They began the project with a lengthy hunt for a suitable place to mount a microwave radio system capable of bouncing a signal between it and existing towers, which are currently situated next to Yurok headquarters and on the tsunami siren in the Glen. After testing multiple areas, a promising site was discovered atop a steep slope covered in young conifers, hardwoods and brush. The altitude allowed for a nearly clear line of sight to each of the three locations, but the transmission was faint.

“At first we could not find a strong enough signal,” Offins, the Broadband Manager said. “There are trees in between the test site and the Glen, so we elevated our antenna on the tsunami siren, and that gave us a sufficient signal.”

After all of the necessary permits were acquired, Offins and



**Broadband Technician Walter Hoffman, a Yurok Tribal member, stands next to the new relay site, which he helped install and sits on the south side of the Klamath River.**

Hoffman built trail through the thickly wooded area, perched high above the Klamath River. The technologically savvy Yurok men are also skilled with chainsaws, which they used to clear from the precipitous path dense shrubbery as well as young pepperwood, Douglas fir and alder trees.

A rope system was set up for safe travel up and down the mountain. The grade was such that one slip could mean a serious injury or worse. At the end of the steep trail, the pair constructed a level landing, where the new microwave system would later be installed.

In preparation for the installation, the Yurok Connect crew transported the following up the nearly vertical route: two 150-pound batteries, a 15-foot metal pole, a heavy duty metal box, a solar panel, two dishes, tools, cement and few smaller items. Offins and Hoffman carried many of these objects up to the flat. They rigged a winch and pulley system to yard the heavy batteries, secured on an aluminum sled, up the slope.

They then installed the microwave radio equipment, along with steel cabinets to protect the electrical components from the elements. Even though the new system is now up and running, it is still in the testing stage of development. In exchange for feedback on how the new system works, Yurok Connect selected three Glen residents to participate in a carefully monitored trial of the new

high-speed service. There have been no issues.

“It is gratifying to see Klamath Glen get the same quality internet service that we offer in the town site,” said Walter Hoffman, Broadband Technician and Yurok Tribal member. “I enjoyed the mental part of this project, processing all of the information, and then implementing it on the ground. It was really exciting”

The Yurok Connect network extends to the east side of the reservation. The Yurok Information Services Department built from scratch that part of system too. A story about it will be published in an upcoming edition of Yurok Today. Since the Tribe was responsible for building both projects, it cost far less than it would if a for-profit business had constructed it. For example, the price tag for the Glen upgrade, a tiny fraction of the whole project, was a little over \$5,000. The same job, if done by a private contractor, would have required the Tribe to spend about \$50,000.

The Yurok Connect system was primarily paid for with funds from the USDA Community-Oriented Connectivity Broadband Grant, in combination with a few other smaller grants, including one from the California Consumer Foundation. ✨

<b>YUROK TRIBAL COURT</b> PO Box 1027 / 230 Klamath Blvd. Klamath, CA 95548 (707) 482-1350 phone (707) 482-0105 fax	Court File Number: _____ Case Type: <u>FAMILY CODE</u>	COMPANION COPY
In re: <u>Josie Kee-ya Louise Parolt</u> (Write current name of person's to be changed)	<b>FILED</b> YUROK TRIBAL COURT AUG 28 2007 BY: <u>NBB</u> YUROK INDIAN RESERVATION	
<b>NOTICE OF MOTION for Change of Name</b>		
<b>TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:</b>		
1. <b>MOTIONER:</b> <u>Rachel David</u> has filed a Motion with this court for decree changing a name as follows: a. Present Name: <u>Josie Kee-ya Louise Parolt</u> b. Proposed Name: <u>Josie Kee-ya Louise David</u>		
2. <b>THE COURT REQUIRES</b> that all persons interested in this request shall appear before the court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name change described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least three (3) court (business) days before the hearing date and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted.		
3. <b>HEARING DATE, TIME AND PLACE</b> (At least 90 days from filing date): a. Date: <u>December 15<sup>th</sup></u> b. Time: <u>9:30 A.M.</u> c. Location: <u>Klamath, CA</u>		
4. <b>NOTICE:</b> A copy of this NOTICE of MOTION for Change of Name shall be published in TWO (2) consecutive issues of the Yurok Tribe Newsletter.		
5. <b>ISSUED:</b> Clerk of the Court: <u>Nicholle Boulby</u> 8/12/07		



## Yurok of the Week by Brittany Vigil

#YOTW

Yurok of the Week

**Ye-wo'hl.**

Earthquake.

**Ho ye-wo'hl.**

There was an earthquake.

**Kee-tee ye-wo'hl.**

We're going to have an earthquake.

**Keech ye-wo'hl. Keet-kwo tes-to', ko-we-cho' lekw-see soo-tom'.**

We've had an earthquake. It's still shaking (shivering), don't go outside.



## Yurok Housing Indian Authority Update

\* YIHA would like to remind all applicants for all housing programs that they must keep their information updated to remain on the waiting list.

\* Winter is coming! Here are some helpful tips to weatherize your home to keep energy costs down:

- Cover drafty windows by installing tight-fitting, insulating drapes
- Add caulk or weather-stripping to seal gaps around windows and doors
- Wood stoves and pellet burning heaters need to be cleaned regularly; clean the flue vent and inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure efficient heating
- Keep fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning
- Replace filters in furnaces once a month, or as needed
- Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the “warm” setting to save on your energy bill

# 2017 OPERAT



This year's Operation Yurok netted approximately 4,000 plants, which was considerably fewer than were eradicated in the past four years. The drop in plant numbers indicates that the annual law enforcement action, led by the Yurok Public Safety Department, is making progress toward reducing the rampant environmental destruction, water theft and violent crimes associated with clandestine cannabis cultivation.



# ION YUROK



# YTEP hosts intensive training on algae

## *Algae are one of the most important indicators of watershed health*

When Rosalina Stancheva, a researcher from California State University San Marcos, visited the mouth of Blue Creek for the first time she observed several species of algae that one would expect to see in a pristine watershed and others that one would not.

For example, she saw three types of soft-bodied macroalgae called *Cladophora glomerata*, *Ulva flexuosa* and *Stigeoclonium*, which signal the presence of pollutants. The algal expert did not know that feral cows deposit feces into the creek, until Yurok Tribe Environmental Program Assistant Director Koiya Tuttle informed her of the bovine problem. Stancheva hypothesized that the nitrogen and phosphorus in the herbivores' waste was likely promoting the proliferation of these particular species.

"Algae are good indicators of water quality," Stancheva said. "The composition of the algal community can show you the condition of the stream over many months."

Stancheva, along with a half dozen phycology professors from universities all over the United States, and Tribal biologists and technicians were participants in the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's 2017 Algal Foray. Staff from other tribes in the region and local environmental consultants also participated in the week-long training.

"We were really fortunate to be able to provide this training on the Klamath River, the most relevant site for our program," said Tuttle, a Yurok Tribal member and environmental scientist. "Different groups typically host the annual event in places where the environmental conditions are somewhat incongruous with those found on the Klamath."

The primary purpose of the intensive training was to further expand the Tribe's already well-established understanding of Klamath River algae. Throughout the week, the Tribal and non-Tribal participants were primed to identify numerous new algal species and each trainee increased his or her comprehension of algae's role in the riverine ecosystem.

In nature, algae are found wherever water is present. In simple terms, the photosynthetic organisms grow when there are adequate nutrients, sunlight and PH levels. Some species are free-floating, while others attach to rocks and still others creep over fine sediments. A balanced algal population is the most important feature in an aquatic ecosystem and the plant-like microorganisms



**YTEP Assistant Director Koiya Tuttle, a Yurok Tribal member, holds algae sample collected at the mouth of Blue Creek.**

are necessary for the survival of all oxygen breathing creatures, including humans. In fact, algae produce approximately half of the air in the earth's atmosphere.

Algae are extensively employed in YTEP's current water monitoring and environmental assessments. The presence or absence of certain types of algae can indicate both clean and contaminated water, the existence and lack of specific insects, as well as a whole slew of additional, important information about a given ecosystem.

On the Klamath, algae most commonly function as the foundation of the food chain, by providing shelter and nourishment for aquatic insects, which in turn are consumed by salmon and other fish in the river. While harmful algal species, such as the toxic blue-green variety that contaminates the river each summer, receive the most attention, there are hundreds of different types of these aquatic organisms that call the Klamath home. Moreover, most of them provide a net benefit in terms of supporting diverse fish, plant and animal species.

The Environmental Program regularly tests the Klamath River for several unique algal species, including *Microcystis aeruginosa*, which poses a serious threat to public health. YTEP also evaluates traditional foods, such as mussels, for toxins produced by an

oceanic algae and makes the results publicly available.

Every day during the foray, the instruction began just after sun up, and lasted well into the night. In addition to field work, there were detailed presentations about specific algal phenomena and dynamic discussions about environmental protection.

On Friday, August 25, Algal Foray participants broke up into two teams. One group headed to the Klamath estuary with a narrow net to harvest samples of suspended algae from the water column. The other went to the mouth of Blue Creek, where they harvested fingernail-sized exemplars from more than 30 unique algal varieties, in an area the size of the Klamath Stick Game field.

Where Blue Creek emits its aquamarine water into the Klamath, there were green, red and brown algae, ranging from shades similar to Sitka spruce needles to the auburn of an oxidized vehicle. One formed lime tinged bubbles in shallows. Another took on the shape of a thick horse's mane and swirled around rocks at the creek's edge. A rust-hued, shiny strain inhabited a seep near Blue Hole, possibly indicating the presences of iron. A specimen, resembling a sponge, occupied a shady spot below a cluster of willow trees and was filled with numerous wriggling worms that were visible to the naked eye.

After all of the samples were collected the groups met back at the training location at Rivers West Lodge, where every available tabletop was covered in microscopes. The classroom-like setting

allowed participants to ask questions to the algal experts, who kept track of a mounting number of positively identified species.

Upon close examination, many algal specimens appeared very similar to their larger, oceanic relative — seaweed. The examination of the collected algae lasted until the sun went down and crew decided to call it for the day.

The ample time afforded by the algal seminar, created an ideal opportunity for the participating organizations to forge new partnerships and identify future research projects.

One research question, posed at the YTEP's Algal Foray, pertained to the potential ecological implications associated with the tons of nitrogen and phosphorus that travel from the upper Klamath basin to the ocean. The participant asked, "What affect is this having on the algae in the marine ecosystem?"

"We worked so hard to bring this training here because we knew it would bring to light new research questions, like this one, which we haven't yet asked and answered," concluded Tuttle.

**The Yurok Tribe Environmental Program would like to thank the following individuals for the contribution to the Algal Foray: Rex Lowe, Professor Emeritus from Bowling State University, Mary Power, Professor/Faculty Directors from UC Berkeley/Angelo Coast Range Reserve, Paula Furey, a Freshwater Ecologist/Professor from St. Catherine University, Rosalina Stancheva, a Senior Scientist from California State San Marcos. ✨**

# Yurok Obituaries

**By Eugene Lewis**

**Herman Peters**  
3.3.1918-11.15.1976

Herman Peters, the brother of Jim and Gene Peters, has finally been found and buried at home Down River. I thank the Yurok Tribe for acknowledging my "ancestor." He had left from Down River at the young age of 15-years-old. The saying was during that time is to have your hard hat, lunch bucket, and work boots to be able to go to work wherever work was found. My great uncle travelled out into the broad expanse of this world. He found work becoming a "Jack of all Trades," but predominantly being a farm worker before Caesar Chavez let the world know of the importance of farm labor, which supply stores with food. A simple man in changing time had an unsaid importance. Uncle Herman being born in 1918, thinking back, my great uncle Frank Douglas, born in 1892 and passing in 1986, had me think — We are from that time of our ancestors. With God's grace we buried him on September 24, 2017 at home Down River. He amazingly sat on a shelf at a San Jose mortuary from 1976 to 2017 yet has been identified and returned home. BIA lists him as a Yurok Indian man and a tribal acknowledgement of ancestry.

Wokhleu, Wokhleu, Wokhleu,  
The Peters Family

# Council Rep. speaks for wildlife health

## *Yurok land stewardship practices boost mammal populations*

In Yurok Tribal Councilman Thomas Willson's lifetime, western natural resource management decisions have decimated the deer and elk populations in Yurok ancestral territory.

When the outgoing Weitchpec Representative was in his youth, Yurok Country was flush with natural foods, including these antlered animals. Today, Yurok hunters have a hard time finding black-tailed buck tracks, let alone a mature animal to harvest. The elk numbers are significantly worse. Some, like Willson, have given up hunting for the time being to allow the paltry number of elk and deer time to reproduce.

"It's really sad. There are no animals in our back country," said Willson, who is barely middle-aged. "I haven't hunted in eight years because I feel so bad for the deer, but I always look for sign that they're around. I rarely see any."

On a recent, five-hour tour of the uplands outside of the reservation boundary, in places where Willson successfully hunted in the past, the majority of the hoof prints found were made by feral cows, which pollute the creeks, damage the forest and exclude other large grazers like elk. There were no game trails or even evidence of deer browsing. One sole buck track was located on the edge of three-year-old forest fire.

"When I was a kid you could drive down the road and see dozens of deer between Weitchpec and Johnson's," Willson said. "There should be plenty of animals here, given how remote it is, but there isn't. Even though we didn't create this problem, we are working to fix it. As native people, we have an obligation to leave something better for the next generations."


The ungulate decline is not unique to Yurok Country. In California, where state natural resource managers lump mule deer in with black tails, there were approximately 2 million deer in 1960. By 2015 there were about 500,000 deer within the state's 99 million acres, according to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"Among the public management factors contributing to the decline (in black-tailed deer) have been fire suppression and other forest management strategies particularly related to the logging industry," according to a 2016 peer-reviewed, scientific study titled, *Public Management Decisions Related to the Decline of California Deer Populations: A Comparative Management Approach*.



The deep drop in deer and elk populations is directly linked to the destruction of habitat, which was caused by historical logging practices around the 1960s. Prior to the Tribe becoming formally organized, private timber operations perpetuated a wildlife unfriendly pattern that lasted for decades. Massive clear-cuts were followed by the application of herbicides, which was succeeded by the planting of overly dense stands of conifers, sometimes in places where they never grew before. Logging companies also planted over thousands of acres of prairie lands on the Yurok Reservation and adjacent lands because the rich soils supported rapid tree growth. This forest creation eliminated hundreds of miles of edge habitat, the interface between forest and prairie, where browsers like deer find safety and food. In the Tribe's aboriginal territory, more than 75 percent of prairies have been lost and on the reservation the rate is even higher. The destruction of grasslands and the establishment of tree farms, comprised of a single tree species, has drastically reduced the amount of food available to deer and elk.

"There was a large prairie that went from Wautec to Surpur and many others between the coast and Weitchpec," Willson said. "Back in the day you could walk up to a prairie, and boom, there would be a deer. Now they are covered in Douglas fir. Doug fir has a place in the ecosystem, but the oaks and prairies are what support healthy wildlife populations. That is why we are working to get



them back.”

Additionally, the few remaining meadows are much smaller in comparison to before the industrial logging boom and are still under threat from the encroachment of Douglas fir, a species that is quick to out compete the perennial plants that are favored by native mammals.

In addition to the habitat destruction produced by timber operations, an overly aggressive approach to fighting wildfires and the strict enforcement of a ban on the Tribe’s traditional burning practices played matching roles in the deer and elk decline.

For most of the 20th century, non-Indian fire managers quickly extinguished every single blaze, whether it was a low-intensity, forest-improving conflagration or a crown fire. Low magnitude fires, whether started by lightning or by the hands of trained Tribal members in a controlled setting, remove excessive brush beneath the trees. These moderate burning events also spur for multiple years an abundance of the succulent, nutritious vegetation for animals to eat.

“When the conditions are right, forest fires should be allowed to burn,” Willson said.

Although the current quantity of harvestable animals is bleak, a Yurok-led effort to boost deer and elk numbers is already underway. The Tribe has recently reacquired large parcels of formerly Yurok land, which once supported substantial wildlife populations. Tribal restorationists, under the Tribal Council's leadership, are working hard to rehabilitate these properties to the state they were in before the arrival of Europeans.

“The Forestry Department is restoring a prairie in the Blue Creek Watershed,” said Willson, who would like to see an increase in the scale of these projects. “We are also preparing another prairie near Ryerson Ranch for the reintroduction of elk back to the reservation. If we don’t do something now, we will be saying the same thing in 20 years, which is that we need to do something. If we take action now we will have lots of deer and elk in 20 years, we can say that we did something good for our future generations. In 100 years we will have a thriving ecosystem.”

Also, the Tribe, in partnership with the Cultural Fire Management Council, the Nature Conservancy and others are in the process of bring back to Tribal lands the strategic use of fire, a potent resource for rehabilitating large swaths of animal habitat.

“Fire, when used in a way that is consistent with our Traditional Ecological Knowledge, is a tool of renewal,” Willson said. “We use fire as a purifier, and to bring everything back into balance.”

Prior to the burn ban, both deer and elk had access to ample food sources throughout the Tribe's ancestral territory. While deer numbers are at an all-time low, local elk numbers are even more depressed. Between 1849 and 1925 the area’s elk population

plummeted from several hundred thousand animals to just 15. Currently, there are a few hundred animals that reside on the coast between Gold Beach, OR and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

“Elk used to be the buffalo of the Pacific Northwest. They aren’t here anymore because there’s nothing for them to eat,” Willson said. “Also, the natural travel corridor from the coast to the reservation is now choked with an impenetrable barrier of brush left by logging companies. It used to be an open forest that made it easy for the animals to move freely and avoid predation. We need to work together with the Karuk and Hoopa Tribes as well as the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation, private land owners and the park to heal the entire landscape. It could be a model for the entire United States.”

In addition to being an important traditional food resource, elk also play a significant role in maintaining the landscape. For example, when these large mammals move into a recently burned prairie their grazing habits keep the area open and well-fertilized.

“The elk will take care of the land once it is burned. Elk are essentially goats on steroids,” Willson said. “Once elk move in we will have to burn less frequently because they will do the job for us.”

Willson would like federal, state as well as private and other Tribal natural resource managers to adopt a similar restorative approach. Native mammals do not recognize land ownership borders and need continuous habitat to flourish. Restoring the forest and prairie ecosystems will also all but remove the threat of an out of control wildfire because there will be less fuel on the forest floor.

The loss of traditional resources is equal parts food security and a health and wellness issue. The Yurok Tribe’s traditional knowledge has within it a blueprint for re-creating a truly sustainable food system that not only has a net positive impact on the environment, but supports a large population of people.

“You can’t be sovereign without food security,” Willson explained. “As Native Americans, we thrive on natural foods.”

Prior to the industrial logging boom, Yurok Country was flush with antlered animals, acorns and several fish species. A diverse array of edible wild greens, nuts and potatoes were found throughout the Tribe’s lands. These resources were sustainably stewarded by Yurok people, specifically the head man of each traditional village.

As the sun went down and the 5-hour search for deer sign was nearly concluded, a healthy looking doe was spotted on the side of a slight ravine. Willson offered a few words to the animal before she trotted off.

“I said a prayer for her to produce many offspring and to protect her. The does are our seed,” Willson said. ✨

# Algal toxin hits record-high on Klamath

## *Presence of algae is a symptom of a much larger problem*

This fall's extremely elevated levels of a liver-damaging toxin in the Lower Klamath River is a symptom of a pervasive problem that has far-reaching implications.

"The Klamath River is extremely sick," said Thomas P. O'Rourke Sr., Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. "Algae are a clear indicator of poor water quality, which negatively affects the salmon population and the ecosystem as a whole. It's frustrating that even with this year's above-average rainfall and snowpack, the river conditions are still compromised."

The Yurok Tribe Environmental Program, during its weekly water quality tests on September 12 and 13, detected record-breaking levels of microcystin, a contaminant emitted by a toxic algal species called *Microcystis aeruginosa*. The test results contained 10 to 30 times more of the toxin than common health standards deem safe and were the highest since testing began in 2006.

This year, high rates of microcystin first showed up in late August, which prompted Tribal and public health officials to warn residents against contacting a 200-mile stretch of the river below the lower four Klamath dams. In addition to causing injury to the livers of humans and other mammals, exposure to the toxin is also harmful to the eyes, skin and throat.

"Tribal fishers cannot avoid contact with the river and regularly suffer from severe skin rashes on their arms as a result of reaching into the water to bring fish on their boats. For millennia, our ceremonial practitioners have entered the river in the late summer, but have recently had to forego this sacred ritual to avoid getting sick," Chairman O'Rourke said. "It is unacceptable that this ultimately resolvable problem has been allowed to persist for so long."

Each summer, massive microcystin blooms form in the reservoirs behind the Copco and Iron Gate dams, which produce the ideal conditions for this particular algal species to rapidly reproduce. Located in an area with an arid climate, the shallow reservoirs are filled with warm water and abundant agricultural waste from a sprawling network of farms near the Klamath's headwaters. The combination of heat and nutrients enable the algae to multiply. When dropping temperatures at the end of summer kill the photosynthetic microorganism it broadcasts the toxin down river.

The four dams on the Klamath River are on a trajectory for removal in 2020, pursuant to the amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, which was signed in April 2016 by the



owner of the dams, PacifiCorp, and California, Oregon, Yurok and Karuk Tribes, along with several other conservation groups and stakeholders. The petition to remove the four dams is currently going through the permitting processes of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the Water Boards of the states of California and Oregon.

"It is a known fact that the Klamath dams are an incubator for the toxic algae. Removing the four dams will substantially reduce the quantity of the toxin present in the river, to a point where our people can once again practice our traditional ceremonies without being subject to toxic water quality," Chairman O'Rourke said. "The water quality improvements that will come from the taking down the fish-blocking dams will also significantly improve struggling salmon runs on the Klamath."

The 15,000 square-mile Klamath Basin occupies a rural, sparsely populated landscape. The river, once the producer of an estimated 1 million salmon per year, predominantly flows through a forest environment that is far from any metropolitan centers, and for this reason fisheries researchers believe it is the most restorable, large watershed in the West.

This year, the primary Klamath chinook run was predicted to be the worst in history. While the final numbers will not be available until later this year, very few fish have been seen making the spawning migration.

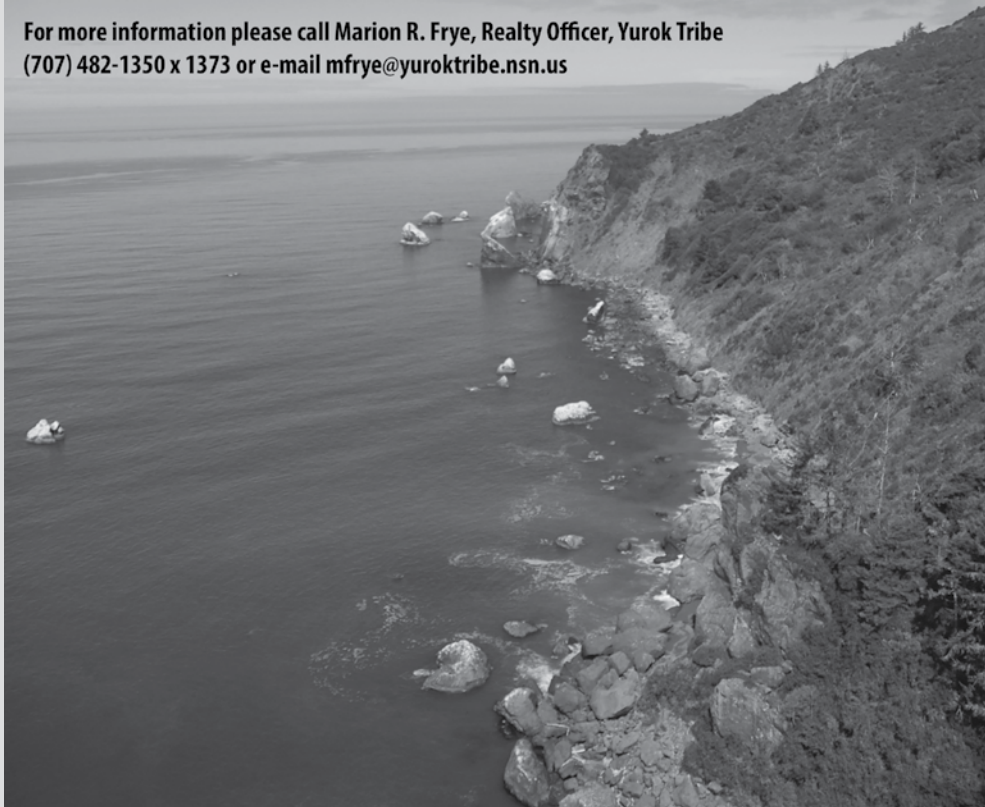
"As Yurok people, we have an obligation to speak up for the salmon and the health of our river. If the river is not responsibly managed, there will be no fish for future generations. The Yurok Tribe asks all interested individuals to join our battle to begin to heal the Klamath." concluded Chairman O'Rourke. ✨

The Yurok Tribe's REALTY DEPARTMENT continues to OFFER THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- Land Consolidation Planning
  - Will Drafting
  - Informing Indian Landowners on the Land Buy-Back program
  - Providing service to update Contact Information to the Office of the Special Trustee (OST) for the Whereabouts Unknown List (WAU)
  - Trust Land Probate Preparation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Outreach events are scheduled for:

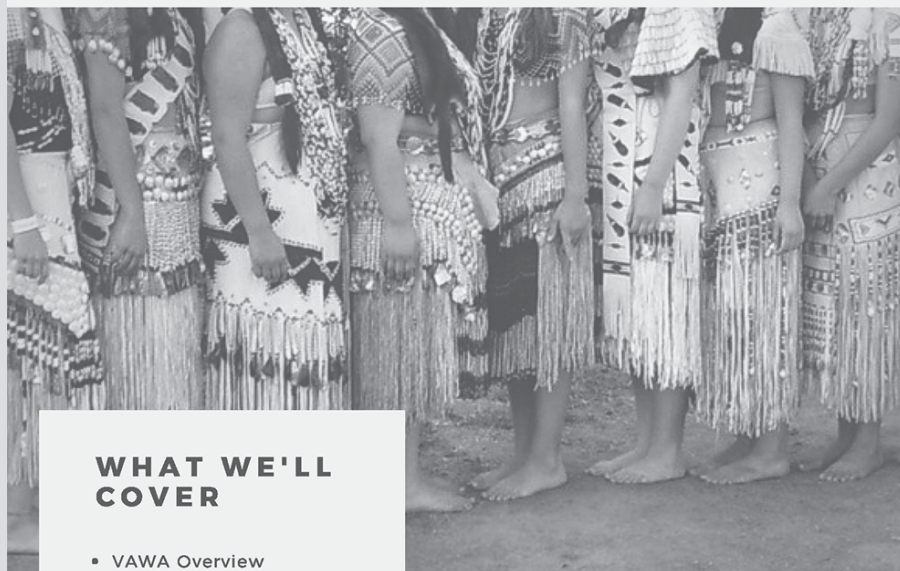
NOV. 4, 2017 11:00am-2:00pm NORTHCOAST INDIAN DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, Crescent City, CA  
DEC. 8, 2017 1:00pm-4:00pm KLAMATH TRIBAL BUILDING, Klamath, CA

For more information please call Marion R. Frye, Realty Officer, Yurok Tribe  
(707) 482-1350 x 1373 or e-mail [mfrye@yuroktribe.nsn.us](mailto:mfrye@yuroktribe.nsn.us)



## SAVE THE DATE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERENCE:  
AN ACTION PLAN TO END THIS RESIDUAL  
IMPACT OF THE INVASION



### WHAT WE'LL COVER

- VAWA Overview
- Tribal Police Readiness
- Cultural Responses
- Model Programming Suggestions
- Jurisdictional Issues
- Time to Develop Individual Community Action Plans

November 29-30, 2017  
on the Yurok  
Reservation, Klamath,  
California

190 Klamath Blvd., Klamath, CA  
9AM - 5PM

Registration is free at [Eventbee.com](http://Eventbee.com)  
Learn more at [yuroktribe.org](http://yuroktribe.org)



# Tribe hires new Forestry Department Director



The Yurok Tribe recently hired Edward Mann as the Director of the Forestry Department. Mann brings ample experience as a natural resource manager, including in using fire to promote healthy forest and prairie ecosystems.

He will be responsible for forest management activities, such as National Environmental Protection Act process and documentation, timber harvesting, forest development projects as well as prescribed fire.

Mann is a certified silviculturist having gone

through the National Advanced Silviculture Program. He has worked for the Spokane Tribe of Indians as a silviculturist and timber harvest preparation forester. He also worked for the Yakama Nation as a Planning and Inventory forester.

The new Forestry Director strongly believes in the use of prescribed fire as a valuable tool that must be used aggressively and wisely to meet the Tribes management goals and objectives. ❖



# Yurok Tribe

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**Yurok Training Exchange participants burned this big, easily accessible patch of hazel**