## [Spring NRCS Tribal Advisory Committee Meeting](https://www.google.com/calendar/event?eid=OWFnb25jNHFqMHJwNTMwMHBsbGJhanZvdGsgY2FtcnluQGluZGlhbmFnLm9yZw)

## Wednesday Apr 20, 2022 | 9:00am-12:30pm PST

**Attendees:**

**NAME** **ORGANIZATION**

Caitlin Joseph Women for the Land Program and Policy Manager at American

Farmland Trust

Caressa Nguyen Iona Band of Miwok Indians, former IAC and NRCS intern

Cherilyn Ashmead United Auburn Indian Community

Connor Magee Climate Science Alliance

Cristina Torres

David Thompson Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

David Sanden NRCS Public Affairs, Area 4

Debra Rasmussen Director Enterprise Rancheria Estom Yumeka Maidu

Denise Cuevas Administrative Assistant for EPA department at Santa Rosa

Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe

Emily Burgueno Santa Ysabel, tribal member and head seed keeper for Kumeyaay

tribe

Erika Partee Natural Resources Director, Tolowa Dee Ni’ Nation

Elena Sisneros Habitat & Wildlife Division Manager for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

Greg Norris NRCS State Engineer

Isaac Bojorquez KaKoon Ta Ruk Band of Ohlone-Costanoan Indians

Jeremy Zagarella Pala Tribe, Natural Resource Planner, San Diego

Jae Lee NRCS Programs Director

Julie Tex CA Public Domain Allottee Association, Western Mono

Joseph Gonzales Environmental Specialist for EPA department at Santa Rosa

Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe

Ken Sandusky Modoc Nation, Resource and Development Director for CA

Krystal Moreno Shingle Springs Band of Miwok

Margaret Smither-Kopperl NRCS, Plant Materials Center Director

Mary Raigosa Chair for Cultural Committee on Paskenta Band of Nomlaki

Meagen Baldy Hoopa Tribal member, IAC executive board, KTRCD

Rebecca Blackwood Tribal member and Environmental Assistant for Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

Ryan Macintosh Environmental Program Director for Santa Rosa Rancheria

Lisa Haws Tribal Administrator Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay

Trisha Frank Environmental Coordinator for Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay

Teresa Romero Environmental Director for Santa Ynez Band of Chumash

Vanessa Minott Tribal Administrator for Santa Rosa band of Cahuilla

**NRCS STAFF** **POSITION**

Carlos Suarez NRCS-USDA, State Conservationist

Brendaly Rodriguez Munoz NRCS-USDA, Acting Area 1 ASTCFO

Brooke Raffaele NRCS- USDA FSA, Outreach Coordinator

Alan Curry Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations Area

2, Salinas, CA

Chris Zimny State Forester with NRCS in Davis

Carolyn M. Jones USDA-NRCS, Bay/Delta Team Agricultural Engineer

Chris Null CA State Archaeologist

Cody Leslie NRCS Tribal Planner Area 4

Curtis Tarver Area Supervision USDA NRCS

David Sanden NRCS Public Affairs, Area 4

Gayle Barry NRCS Deputy State Conservationist & Supervision for

Tribal Team in Davis, CA

Greg Norris NRCS State Engineer

Jae Lee NRCS Programs Director

Jenny Johnson NRCS Tribal Planner Area 3

John Drumm NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Management

and Strategy

Jon Gustafson State Resource Conservationist, USDA NRCS, Davis, CA

Kagat Mcquillen Northern CA Tribal Liaison- NRCS

Margaret Smither-Kopperl NRCS, Plant Materials Center Director

Pedro Torres Southern CA Tribal Liaison- NRCS

RaeAnn Dubay NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs

**Invocation – Meagen Baldy, Hoopa**

**Carlos Suarez, NRCS, California State Conservationist- Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Thank you all for attending the Tribal Advisory Committee meeting. We continue to use your feedback to improve our tribal programs. Such as:

* + how we prioritize resource concerns for tribal program applications,
  + how we look at cultural burning compared to other application of prescribed fire for conservation,
  + how we train our staff in working effectively with Tribal Governments
* This year marks the 10th year of Tribal EQIP. The last two years we spent more than 150% of the funds allocated.
* Today we will touch upon some new opportunities including:
  + Alternative Funding Arrangements which give NRCS some flexibility in how we provide funds to tribes through EQIP an CSP
  + And the USDA Office Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production. Which I want to make clear, though “Urban” is in the name, these opportunities do not exclude tribes. The programs of the Office Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, especially the grant programs, are being designed to include tribes
  + Partnership for Climate smart commodities
* Also, I would like to introduce Chis Null, the new State Archeologist for NRCS California.
* I want to thank Blong Xiong FSA CA Executive Director and Brooke Raffaele FSA CA State Outreach Coordinator forjoining us to share on FSA programs andLexie Holden from Intertribal Agriculture Council to present on Native Farm Bill Coalition.
* It really is something, how large this forum has become. You have stuck with us through these last few very difficult pandemic years. We hope to build upon that success. For the Fall meeting we are working on a hybrid format so that you can participate either virtually or in person.
* I want to close by thanking all of you for participating in the Tribal Advisory Committee. It really is your input that has helped us develop our Tribal Assistance program and we will continue to

**Tribal Representatives- Introductions: Priority Concerns for your Tribe**

Caressa Nguyen, Ione Band of Miwok Indians former IAC/NRCS intern

* No concerns, just listening

Cherilyn Ashmead, United Auburn Indian Community

* Forest - revegetation and thinning project
* Proscribed and cultural fire
* Water related projects

Connor Magee, Pala Band of Mission Indians, Climate Science Alliance

* Listening to see what new developments are coming out of NRCS
* CSA works with 20 tribes as partners
* Capacity concern- to build capacity for Tribal partners
  + Funding, writing grants, working with tribal governments, executing work
* Increase the number of trained professionals to work for the Tribes
* Have trainings to increase capacity to do restoration work
  + CSA providing fuel management and fire training along with native plant propagation trainings

Debbie R, EPA Director for Enterprise Rancheria

* No concern
* Interested in Tribal nursery training

Denise Cuevas, Administrative assistant for EPA department at Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe

Emily Burgueno, Santa Ysabel, tribal member and head seed keeper for tribe for Kumeyaay

* Desecration of sacred sites
* Accessing homelands off reservation
* Water management
* Oak restoration
* Plants and animals facing extinction
* Criminalization for practicing cultural burns
* Educational resources
* Food and security and food sovereignty
* Question- common recipients- edible plant list to help relearn to include in the commodity foods (NATIFS project)
  + Asked if participants have any plants they want on the list
  + Email- emaleechan@aol.com

Erika Partee, Natural Resources Director, Tolowa Dee Ni’ Nation

* Building staff capacity - Larger landscape problems
* Fuels reduction

Isaac Bojorquez- KaKoon Ta Ruk Band of Ohlone-Costanoan Indians

* Cultural burning/prescribed burning
* Networking and partnerships
* Water management

Jeremy Zagarella, Pala Band, Natural Resources Planner, San Diego

* Degraded habitat
* Wildfire risk reduction- in all forms
* Invasive plant reduction- around the river
* Oak woodland health
* Water quality-Tribe is all on well water
* Sustainable funding for those concerns

Ken Sandusky, Modoc Nation, Resource and Development Director for California efforts

* Works with 10K acres of Federal land
* Juniper encroachment and invasive annual grasses due to cultural fire exclusion
* Reintroduce healthy fire, help with groundwater recharge
* Ranch they are reviving that relies on ground water for growing hay and will use to feed buffalo
* Capacity

Mary Raigosa, Chair for Cultural Committee on Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians

* Cultural burn
* Better manage land
* Came to listen and learn for other tribes

Meagan Baldy, Hoopa Tribal member, IAC executive board, KTRCD

* Water management
* Cultural burning

Rebecca Blackwood, Environmental Assistant for Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

* JSOB eradication without pesticides
* Oak restoration
* Working with youth to teach about plants for medicine and food to be self sustaining
* Listen and learn

Ryan Mcintosh, Environmental Protection Program Director, Santa Rosa Rancheria

* Drought and drought related water issues
* Habitat restoration including invasive species eradication
* Native plant propagation
* Comments at the end:
  + “I was hoping to hear a little more about NRCS hosting Cultural Burning Trainings, I feel it would be appropriate to host such trainings on Tribal Lands but with the involvement of Federal and State agencies as they seem to be the regulatory entity there. I recall talking about this during the last TAC meeting - I have been working on Quarter 2 budgets during this meeting so I may have missed it if it was discussed. I was pleased to hear about Traditional Nursery trainings, but regional soil types,elevation and climate should be considered for this, i.e. training hosted in NorCal, Central CA, and SoCal annually, if funding allows. For example, hosting a training in NorCal focused on NorCal soil, water quantity, climate, etc. may be useless for Central CA and SoCal Tribes.”

Teresa Romero, Environmental Director, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash

* Good fire on the ground and landscape
* Water concerns and water resource concerns
* Impacts to resources due to climate change

Trisha Frank, Environmental Coordinator Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

* Listen and learn what is going on with NRCS

Vanessa Minott- Tribal Admin for Santa Rosa

* For updates NRCS has
* info as to where to start on the IRMP- need help on getting that management plan together

Julie Tex, Western Mono, CA Public Domain Allottee Association

* Listen and learn
* Member of Newly formed California Public Domain Association sponsored by the California Indian Legal service
* 3 hr meetings are tedious and fill with too much info and get overwhelmed

Joseph Gonzales, Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi-Yokut Tribe, EPA Environmental Specialist

* Listen and learn
* Comment at the end:
  + “I like everything that was said today, especially the cultural burning. I didn't have any questions at the time. but thank you all for having me here today.”

Vanessa M Tribal Administrator for Santa Rosa

* Listening to see what NRCS has going on
* Where to start with the IRMP
  + Grant got funded but they don’t have anyone in the department to do it so she has to put it together and needs help

Denise Cuevas, admin assistant for EPA department, Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe

Elena Sisneros, Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation, Habitat and Wildlife Division Manager

* Tribal nursery training
* Excited about compost

Kanyon Sayers Konsulting

* Funding
* Comments at the end:
  + “Prescribed burn associations invite Indigenous consultants and collaboration
  + Kanyon Konsulting to Everyone”
  + “our community can't do cultural burns due to the area being a tinder box and limited funds for a burn boss and insurance. so... we have FIRE MIMICRY WORKSHOPS https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fire-mimicry-and-tek-indian-canyon-tickets-293345262577”

Chris Zimny, State Forester with NRCS in Davis

* Announced that the governor’s Wildfire Resilience Taskforce is issuing action plans for for private landowners and tribes, there will be a workshop being planned likely in May to discuss the action plans related to private landowner assistance (financial and TA improvement) being provided by the multiple agencies in the task force
* If TAC members are interested he wants to ensure they get an invite to that

**Pedro Torres, NRCS, Southern California Tribal Liaison- Updates from Last TAC**

* 10th year of Tribal EQIP
* Conservation planning Workshops
* Cultural Burn Workshop
* Planning for Indigenous Stewardship Methods
* Agreement modifications with IAC

**Upcoming opportunities through NRCS and other USDA agencies**

* Alternative Funding Arrangements, Pedro Torres
  + Outlined through a programmatic agreement
  + Increased flexibility-for practice payments and tribes can be reimbursed for providing TA under the agreement and indirect costs
  + Increased responsibility to the tribe- documenting actual costs, reporting on progress of work under the agreement, and ensuring adequate number of participants necessary to accomplices the relevant program’s purposes
* Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, Pedro Torres
  + More focused on food sovereignty
  + Grants
    - CFWP, UAIP, planning projects, implementation projects
  + opened to urban offices (FSA & NRCS),
  + federal advisory committee on urban and innovative needs
  + Do not excludes tribes
* Conservation Stewardship Program, Curtis Tarver and Cody Leslie
* FSA programs, Brooke Raffaele
  + Youth loan project
  + Farm storage facility loans
  + County community (COC)

**Blong Xiong**

* New State Executive Director for USDA CA FSA
* Nonprofit community work 25 yrs, such as local tribes

**Job opportunities with NRCS, Gayle Barry and John Drumm**

* Increase tribal representation
* Pathways program
* 1994 Tribal Scholars program
* Direct Hire
* Recent Grad
* Earth Team Volunteer program
* USA jobs website

**Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities, Carlos Suarez**

* Climate Smart
* Help provide climate solutions
* Provide TA in how to improve lands
* Higher payment rates, incentives
* Allocating 10M nationally support climate solutions
* 25M innovation trials for climate solutions
* 15M for new projects
* Wetland program to enhancing lands
* Funding for farmers to implement conservation practices to build climate resilience
* Maximize to protect environment

**IAC – Presentation on Native Farm Bill Coalition, Lexie Holden, IAC**

* Native Farm Bill Coalition (NFBC) Overview
* 2018 coalition success
* Looking ahead to 2023
  + Roundtables and listening sessions
  + May 11, Walker River Paiute, Schurz, NV
  + July 31-Aug 4, Tribal Self-Governance Conference, Burlingame, CA
* How to stay involved
  + Increasing parity, expanding self-governance, expanding TA access, by natives for natives

**Closing remarks**

Pedro Torres

* Thanks for those who participated and gave feedback
* Make sure we are providing services or if we need to make some improvements
* Letting everyone know when the next meeting will be hybrid

**Questions**

Emily Burgueno

* Compost training in different communities

Ken Sandusky

* Local offices don't have capacity personnel-how do these get to local offices when it is hard to even get a meeting
* Gayle Barry -2 state liaisons
  + Engage with them to get service

Ken Sandusky

* CRP- Soil map did not allow them to participate in CSP
* Answer: CSP - doesn't have geographic requirements but have to be entire operation
* Gayle Barry - get with local planner and what you want to accomplish