

**USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 21st from 9:00am to 12:30pm

Virtual Meeting

Meeting information available at the [TAC webpage](#)

Attendees

Keir K. Johnson-Reyes	Intertribal Agriculture Council
Connie Reitman	
Jessica Lopez	Konkow Valley Band of Maidu
Mark Clark	Konkow Valley Band of Maidu
Wallace Clark	Konkow Valley Band of Maidu
John Gichuki	Big Valley Rancheria
Zach Emerson	Cache Creek Conservancy
Anne-Marie Sayers	Indian Canyon Nation
Krystal Moreno	Shingle Springs band of Miwok Indians
Alex Watts-Tobin	Karuk Tribe
Brenda Guzman	Barbareño band of Mission Indians
Brett Matzke	Cortina Band of Wintun Indians
Charles Lwenya	Tule River Tribe
Arlene Dutchkie	Ion band of Miwok Indians
Creig Marcus	Enterprise Rancheria of Maidu Indians
Ed Ketchum,	Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
Javier Silva	Manchester Point Arena Band of Pomo Indians and California Indian Environmental Alliance, North Coast Resource Partnership
Jessica Clayburn	Yurok Tribe
Richard Nelson	Yurok Tribe
Joe Davis	Hoopa Valley tribe
Kurt Bros	Pala Band of Mission Indians
Laverne Bill	Yocha Dehe Wintun
Meagen Baldy	Klamath Trinity Resource Conservation District
Megan Van Pelt	Resighini Rancheria
Rudy Ortega	Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
Ryan Marshall	Fort Independence band of Paiute Indians
Steve Spencer	Susanville Indian Rancheria
Teresa Romero	Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians
Terre Logsdon	Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians
Trisha Frank	Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation

Cliff Devers	Pauma band of Luiseno Indians
Sue Carter	Big Sandy Rancheria
Carlos Suarez	State Conservationist (STC), NRCS
Gayle Barry	Special Assistant to the STC, NRCS
John Drum	Assistant STC (Management & Strategy), NRCS
RaeAnn Dubay	Assistant STC (Programs), NRCS
Jon Gustafson	Acting State Resource Conservationist, NRCS
Emily Castano	State Archaeologist, NRCS
David Sanden	Public Affairs Specialist, NRCS
Kagat McQuillen	Tribal Liaison, Area 1 & 2, NRCS
Pedro Torres	Tribal Liaison, Area 3 & 4, NRCS
Tony Sunseri	Assistant STC for Field Operations, Area 1, NRCS
Kay Joy Barge	Assistant STC for Field Operations, Area 2, NRCS
Sharon Nance	Assistant STC for Field Operations, Area 3, NRCS
Curtis Tarver	Assistant STC for Field Operations, Area 4, NRCS
Emma Chow	District Conservationist, Santa Maria Service Center, NRCS
Jenny Johnson	Tribal Conservation Planner, Auburn Service Center, NRCS
Suzanne Frazier	Farm Bill Program Assistant, NRCS
Karlie Kijanka	Pathways Intern, NRCS

Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Welcoming Tribes to the Spring 2020 Tribal Advisory Committee
- Introduction of Kagat McQuillen, Tribal Liaison
 - Serves Northern California or NRCS California Area 1 and 2
 - Previous work with tribal nations and federal agencies on natural resource conservation
 - Member of the Yurok Tribe
- NRCS California Strategic Plan 2020-2015
 - Two Main Goals
 - Help the People: customers, employees, and partners
 - Strategic Plan reflects commitment to serve people
 - People's concerns are critical to conservation planning
 - NRCS is an agency of inclusion
 - Help the Land Goals: improving resiliency of California landscapes:
 - Plant productivity and Forest Health
 - Air Quality
 - Water Quality
 - Water Quantity
 - Soil Health
 - Wildlife Habitat
 - This plan was developed in collaboration with local, state, other federal agencies and tribal nations

Tribal Representatives Introductions: Priority Concerns for your Tribe

- Cultural resources management
- Landscape and watershed-level management
- Food sovereignty including community gardens, native and traditional foods
- Native plant restoration including for food, fiber or culture
- Invasive species management
- Forest health including fuels management for wildfire mitigation
- Post-wildfire restoration including for surface- and groundwater quality
- Controlled burning including cultural burning
- Biochar
- Wetland management
- Water resource management including conservation of groundwater quality and quantity
- In-stream channel and riparian restoration including for salmonid habitat
- Rangeland health
- Conservation technical assistance: soil surveys, forest surveys and best management practices

Updates from the Last Meeting

- Pedro Torres Tribal Liaison Southern California or NRCS California Area 3 and 4
 - NRCS Tribal Assistance in 2019, a brief update of work with tribes from 2019 **(See 2019 Tribal Assistance PDF)**
 - [Urban Agriculture Initiative](#) approximately \$3.9 million in fiscal year 2020 in grants and cooperative agreements to nonprofit organizations, local governments, tribal governments and schools
(See Urban Agriculture Initiative presentation)
 - **June 26, 2020** – Deadline to apply for Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production Competitive Grants
 - **July 6, 2020** - Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction Project Cooperative Agreements
- Kagat McQuillen Tribal Liaison Northern California: Salmon Habitat Restoration, examples of [conservation practices](#) used for salmon habitat restoration **(See Salmon Habitat Restoration presentation)**
 - Salmonids are culturally important to many California-based tribes
 - Tribes hold traditional ecological knowledge that has potential to assist in conservation planning

Farm Bill Collaboration Session – RaeAnn Dubay, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs (See **Farm Bill Collaboration PDF**)

- The importance of locally-led conservation
- [Hemp](#) production regulations and final rules on legal hemp production
- Each state to define high priority practices and increase their payment rates
- In California priority practices focused on ground water and soil health
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP)
- [Conservation Stewardship Program](#) (CSP)
- [National Water Quality Initiative](#) (NWQI)
- [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP)
- [Conservation Innovation Grants](#) (CIG)

Conservation Ag Mentor Program- Emma Chow, Program Coordinator
(See NRCS CA CAMP -- **Fact Sheet and presentation**)

- One of NRCS' national priorities for 2020
- Host “producers” (eg. tribes) have been asked to provide mentoring opportunities for NRCS employees
 - Ensuring new NRCS employees are properly trained and mentored
 - To ensure familiarity with the types of agricultural operations where NRCS employees will be working
 - Employees new to the agency within the last 36 months are eligible
- NRCS California hopes tribes will be interested in acting as a host for this program and provide insight into:
 - Indigenous stewardship methods, traditional ecological knowledge and tribal specific resource concerns
- CAMP begins fall 2020
- If you are interested contact Emma Chow, CAMP Coordinator by email: emma.chow@usda.gov or phone: 805-863-9926

Partner Presentation: Cache Creek Conservancy Cultural burning- Zach Emerson, Habitat Restoration Manager (See **Cultural Fire Cache Creek PDF**)

- 140-acre nature preserve in Woodland, Ca
- 3-acre Tending and Gathering Garden, managed using traditional practices
- A source of safe and accessible plant materials for gatherers
- Cultural burning as a management tool and cultural practice
- Positive impacts on habitat and biodiversity
- Lesser air quality concerns from small prescribed burns than large prescribed burns
- Future cultural burning workshops upcoming in January

“Fire is much stronger than we are; we must treat it with respect and discipline” -Emerson

Tribes Invited to Discuss Future Work with NRCS

- Kagat McQuillen Tribal Liaison Northern California
 - Meeting presentations available at the [TAC webpage](#) and by request
 - [CAMP](#) updates will be available as they emerge
 - Cultural burning opportunities will be shared as they arise
 - Cultural burning and CAL FIRE management information requested to the Meeting presenter, Zach Emerson Cache Creek Conservancy
 - Air quality management district coordination required for agricultural burning
 - Additional permits are required during wildfire season
 - Cultural resource surveys and permitting will be followed up on Summer 2020
 - Collaboration with agencies and neighboring landowners on fuel breaks
 - Post-wildfire restoration of mudslide areas, streams and native plants
 - Cultural preservation with NRCS cultural resources team
 - Youth leadership
 - Food sovereignty
 - Fuels management
 - Noxious weed management
 - Food sovereignty and community gardens
 - On-site technical training on conservation practice implementation including burning
 - COVID-19 issues
 - Gayle Barry Special Assistant to the State Conservationist: **NRCS staff are available during the [COVID-19](#) crisis via email, online, telephone or by [appointment](#)**

Carlos Suarez, State Conservationist Closing Remarks

- Thank you for the consultation, feedback and participation
- Please share any feedback that comes up after the Meeting
- NRCS is available for [Tribal Assistance](#)
 - **The Tribal Advisory Committee Fall Meeting will most likely be in October**