



Tribal Perspective on Drought

California Water Commission Meeting

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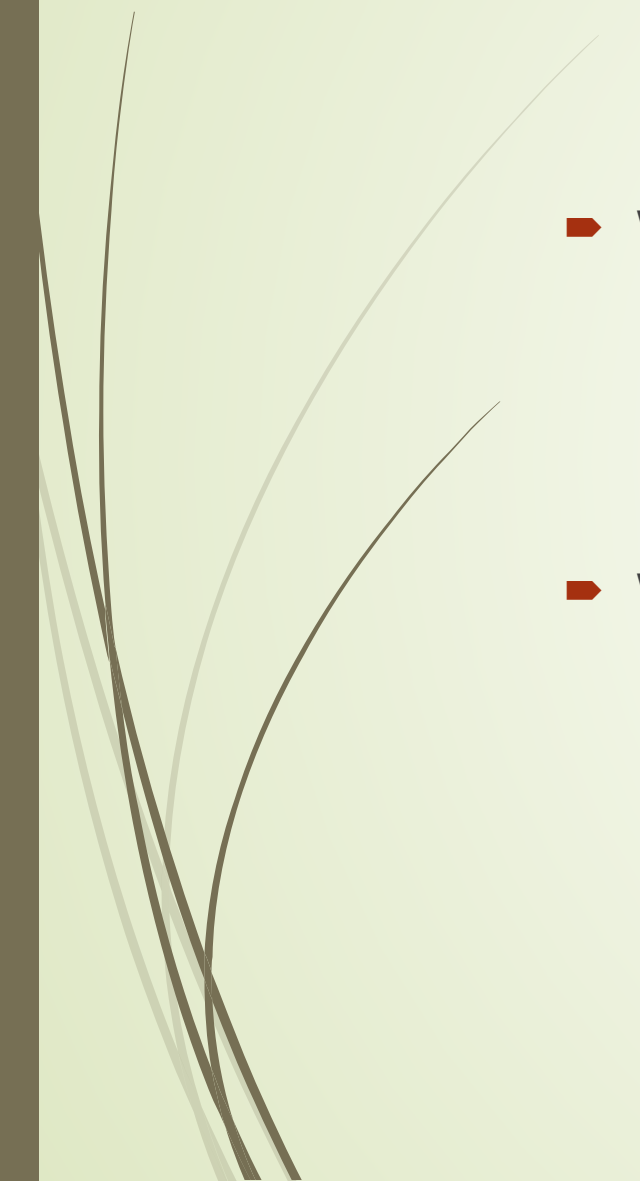
California Tribal Communities

- ▶ 110 Federally Recognized Tribes
- ▶ ~60 Non-Recognized Tribes
- ▶ Numbers vary between 45-60
- ▶ Largest population of Native Communities is in California

▶ https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-leaders-directory/federally-recognized-tribes?field_us_state_s_value=CA&page=0

▶ <https://cla.berkeley.edu/language-maps.html>



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- ▶ Where Tribes are located now is not where they were prior to Contact
 - ▶ Aboriginal Territory vs. Rancherias/Reservations (Modern Tribal Lands)
 - ▶ Ex. Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians; Shasta; Modoc
 - ▶ Due in part to past and modern colonization practices by State and Federal Governments
 - ▶ What are Cultural Resources?
 - ▶ Physical vs. Non-physical
 - ▶ Water, plants, animals, fish, language, baskets, regalia, Sacred sites, Village sites, burial sites

Tribal-Small Group Discussion



Tribal Small-Group Discussions

Discussion Questions

1. How do you define drought?
2. Are you/is your community being impacted by the current drought? How?
3. What impacts do you foresee if the drought continues for another three or more years?
4. How is your community planning for and responding to drought impacts?
5. How can traditional ecological knowledge be incorporated into the State's approach to drought?
6. What kind of support could you use to help your community be resilient to long-term drought?
7. How would you like the Commission to incorporate Tribal perspectives into its ongoing work on long-term drought?
8. Would you like to participate in the Commission's long-term drought work? How?

Overview

- November 2022
- 4 meetings
- 20 Tribes/organizations
 - *12% of potentially 170 Tribes*
- 25 attendees

Key Points

- Engage Tribes early in a process and through-out a process.
- Recognize that no two Tribes are the same.
 - Understand the differing experiences and access to resources of federally recognized and non-federally recognized; gaming and non-gaming Tribes
- Tribes' historic knowledge is vast: in some cases, stretching back centuries.
 - Their planning horizon also vast: in some cases, looking a thousand plus years into the future

Definitions of Drought

- Participants provided diverse perspectives on how drought is defined and considered by Tribes.
 - Drought is part of life; can be anticipated/expected
 - Drought has been in CA forever; Tribes know how to cope under natural conditions, but current droughts are different
 - Drought is political

Drought Impacts, Responses, Concerns

- Participants pointed out that drought impacts and tipping points are very place-specific and noted that the sources of drought impacts often extend beyond their land and their control, so they can't solve them on their own.
- **Impacts** – natural resources are impaired; traditional foods are less abundant/harder to get to; human/wildlife conflict increases; humans/species migration; food sovereignty concerns; water quality issues; wildfire; unable to conduct ceremonies
- **Responses** – community outreach; storing food; managing forests; building new storage; groundwater infiltration; engagement in drought planning at local/State level
- **Concerns** – not involved early enough in drought efforts; not being heard by State/local governments; increased water use with green energy; unsustainable growth in areas with desal

Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- Participants noted the place-specific aspects of TEK, explaining that TEK should be led by Tribes for their areas and that each Tribe may have a different level of willingness to share TEK.
- Participants stressed the importance of extensive outreach, consulting Tribes early in the process – before decisions have been made – to best incorporate Tribal perspectives and TEK.
- TEK will take time and require big changes; need to start small.
- Cultural fire and meadow and floodplain restoration are examples of holistic landscape management.
- We need to start thinking about watersheds – land and water are part of the same cycle; all resources are part of the same system.
- Add the spiritual perspective: water is a life source and not taking care of water is failing to take care of human beings.



Drought Needs

- Participants shared their views on support Tribes need to prepare for, respond to, and be resilient to drought. Generally, participants felt that Tribes needed better-informed decision-makers and funding assistance. They noted that collaborative processes are leading to burn-out.
- Additional needs:
 - water rights
 - triggers that stop water use if it is harming communities
 - policies to support cultural burning
 - drought/climate mitigation through ecosystem restoration
 - clearer communication to Tribes about available programs

Commission's Commitments

- Communication about progress/milestones
 - Communicate Early and Communicate Often
 - Development of regular meetings with Tribes and their representatives
- Open door policy for feedback
 - Consider what this looks like
 - How do Tribes take advantage of this?
 - Developing Tribal Resources within the CWC and within Tribes
- Representation on Working Group and expert panels
 - Consider development of Tribal Working Group

Commission's Commitments (con't)

- Dissemination of this information to Working Group
 - Consider: How Tribes receive information and how to build Capacity
- Opportunity to provide feedback on strategies developed by Working Group via various mechanisms
 - Consider: Tribal only workshops; extending consultation deadlines; creating space for Tribes at the table.
 - Hearing vs. Listening

Other Resources

- NAHC 2015 Guidance During Drought
 - <https://nahc.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Protecting-CA-NA-Sites-During-Drought-Wild-Land-Fire-and-Flood-Emergencies.pdf>
- EPA 2016 Tribal Drought Guidance for Drinking Water
 - <https://www.epa.gov/tribal-pacific-sw/drought-planning-handbook-california-indian-tribes>
- Save California Salmon
 - <https://www.californiasalmon.org>
- California Indian Environmental Alliance
 - <https://www.cieaweb.org>

**PROTECTING CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN
SITES
DURING DROUGHT, WILD LAND FIRE, AND
FLOOD EMERGENCIES**

**A GUIDE TO RELEVANT LAWS
AND
CULTURAL RESOURCES
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November 2015



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Thank you