# Decadal Management Review: Appendix C Tribal Summary



Russian River Estuary meets ocean. Credit - Sara Worden, CDFW

## Tribal Summary to Inform the State of California Marine Protected Area Decadal Management Review

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## **About this Document**

This summary is intended as a living document that will have the opportunity to be further informed, including the Appendix where additional cultural information shared with permission by Tribes and Tribal members will be added through the completion and release of the Decadal Management Review. If you would like to submit Tribe-specific cultural information that gives more context to your Tribes' relationships with the coast for inclusion in the summary, please get in touch with the Decadal Management Review Outreach Native Nations Coordinator, Ms. Teresa Romero, at teresa@strategicearth.com. The Resources Legacy Fund provided financial support for the project, and summary coordination and drafting were supported by Strategic Earth Consulting.

To access the living document please visit:

https://strategicearth.com/wpcontent/uploads/2022/12/FINAL\_AppC\_DMRTribalSummary\_LivingDocument.pdf

Cover image courtesy of Craig Melville.

#### **Table of Contents**

About this Document	1
Executive Summary	3
Tribes' Intrinsic Relationship with Coastal and Ocean Resources	5
Absence of Meaningful Tribal Engagement in the Marine Life Protection Act and Planning California's Marine Protected Area Network	
Tribes and the MPA Planning Process	6
Tribal Take Regulation	7
Evolution of Tribal Involvement in MPA Management Program	8
MPA Statewide Leadership Team	8
Tribal Marine Stewards Network	9
North Coast Baseline Monitoring	9
Community Science Programs	10
MPA Interpretative Signs	10
Chumash Tribal Marine Protected Area Education Program	11
Involvement in MPA Collaboratives	12
Current MPA Management Priorities for Tribes	12
Co-Management	13
Tribal Capacity for Engagement with MPA Management	13
Access and Support for Traditional Gathering and Harvesting in MPAs	14
Ocean Ecological Health and Changing Conditions	14
Education, Outreach, and Communication	15
Enforcement and Compliance	15
Co-Management and Other Opportunities for Partnership	16
Existing Co-Management Policy in State Government	16
Examples of Co-management and Government-to-Government Partnerships	16
Recommendations	18
Improve State Agencies Tribal Engagement and Relationship Building Efforts	18
Create a Clear Pathway to Tribal MPA Management	18
Build Tribal Capacity to Participate	19
Conclusion	19

#### **Executive Summary**

This summary has been developed in collaboration with Decadal Management Review (DMR) Outreach Tribal Steering Committee members, the DMR Outreach Native Nations coordinator, and DMR outreach regional Tribal consultants. It has also been informed by a desktop review of publicly available comments, conversations with Tribal leaders and members, and comments heard during and following the <u>CDFW</u> <u>Round Table with Tribes</u>. This summary will provide an overview of Tribal perspectives and opinions on <u>California MPA Management for the MPA 2022 Decadal Management Review</u>.

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the California coast since time immemorial. Native Tribes are the original stewards of California's coast and ocean despite a history of genocide, forced relocation, and systematic oppression. Tribes rely on the coast and ocean for food, medicine, ceremony, and other customary and beneficial uses, responsibly using natural and cultural resources in accordance with traditional practice. Tribes have never ceded their inherent rights to harvest and gather from, or hold religious ceremonies in, the marine environment. Nor have they surrendered their obligation to manage marine resources sustainably in support of a resilient ocean for all beings.

Limited – and at times absent – Tribal representation was a theme throughout the California marine protected area (MPA) planning process. The State gradually recognized the inadequacy of the MLPA Initiative structure with respect to the inclusion of Tribes. In recognition of this oversight, Tribal representatives were added to regional stakeholder bodies after the central coast planning process. In addition, a Tribal representative was appointed to the North Coast Blue Ribbon Task Force to guide the development of policy on Tribal issues. One of the most significant actions taken by the State to respond to the needs of Tribes was the creation of Tribal take exemptions. However, spurring such a change required significant energy and advocacy from Tribes and partnered organizations. Tribal engagement with MPA management, though improving, is still affected by the initial decision to leave Tribes out of the MLPA and the initial MLPA Initiative.

The State has made strides to learn from its past mistakes and to continue to develop a mutually beneficial and equitable partnership with Coastal California Tribes within the MPA Management Program. Core to this commitment is the inclusion of Tribal representatives in decision-making bodies, and the support of both Tribal-led research/monitoring and education/outreach projects. Some of these actions include:

- Including Tribal representation on the MPA Statewide Leadership Team
- Creation of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network
- Support for Tribal-led science in MPA baseline monitoring
- Support for Tribal outreach and education efforts on MPAs

A collection of Tribal priorities and perspectives on California MPA management was primarily gleaned from online records of public comments about MPA management provided by Tribal members in a number of contexts, including but not limited to: State resource agency public meetings, published reports on Tribal engagement in resource management, news articles, Tribal government websites, and websites of NGOs that regularly with Tribes.

Input on current priorities was also directly solicited through informal conversations coordinated by regionally-based Tribal consultants in partnership with CDFW, a virtual Round Table with Tribes hosted

by CDFW in May 2022, and consultation with the Decadal Management Review Outreach Tribal Steering Committee. The major themes that emerged while ascertaining current Tribal priorities include:

- Co-management of resources between Tribes and State agencies
- Building Tribal capacity for engagement with MPA Management
- Improved education, outreach, and communication between Tribes and State agencies
- Enhanced enforcement efforts for fishing/harvesting, especially those species that Tribes rely on

The following recommendations for the meaningful inclusion of Coastal California Tribes in MPA policy and management have been compiled from existing reports and adapted to reflect the areas of priority identified in the desktop review, in conversations with Tribal membership, and at a Round Table with Tribes.

#### Improve State Agencies Tribal Engagement and Relationship Building Efforts

- Engage in early and frequent communication with Tribal Governments
- Have an understanding of and respect for Tribal decision-making processes
- Ensure a transparent and accountable process that provides clarity on agency decision making and the potential for Tribal Governments to affect the final decision

#### Create a Clear Pathway to Tribal MPA Management

- Tribal people should be recognized as rightful, equal partners in the development, implementation and management of MPAs
- Include and integrate Tribal Ecological Knowledge into the scientific processes of MPA management

#### **Build Tribal Capacity to Participate**

• Tribal governments should be provided with adequate resources to participate in MPA designation, design, and management

Coastal California Tribes remain the original stewards of our land waters despite a history of oppression by non-Tribal governments. Tribal cultural tradition holds that beyond simply having the right, Tribes have an obligation to protect the natural environment that sustains us all. To effectively honor that obligation, the State of California must ensure that Tribes can meaningfully take part in all-natural resource decisionmaking processes, including the MPA Management Program.

Interviews, surveys, public meetings, and a review of past comments have revealed two major themes in how Tribal individuals view California's MPA Management Program: The State is making progress towards meaningful Tribal inclusion and there is much more to be done before Tribes feel they are equal partners in the shared goal of achieving sustainable coastal resource use. State agencies with natural resource management mandates can continue to make strides towards respecting the inherent rights and obligations of Tribes by: building positive relationships through effective engagement, creating a pathway to eventual Tribal co-management of resources, and building the capacity of Tribes to participate in their processes. While this framework has been researched and developed specifically for those who have authority in the management of MPAs, it can be applied in natural resource management contexts statewide.

#### Tribes' Intrinsic Relationship with Coastal and Ocean Resources<sup>1</sup>

Indigenous peoples have inhabited the California coast since time immemorial. Native Tribes remain the original stewards of California's coast and ocean despite a history of genocide, forced relocation, and systematic oppression. Tribes rely on the coast and ocean for food, medicine, ceremony, and other customary and beneficial uses, responsibly using natural and cultural resources in accordance with traditional practice. Tribes have never ceded their inherent rights to harvest and gather from, or hold religious ceremonies in, the marine environment. Nor have they surrendered their obligation to manage marine resources sustainably in support of a resilient ocean for all beings.

Core cultural values, sustainable reciprocity, and observance of natural laws inform all aspects of Coastal California Native tradition. The rich bounty provided by relationships with marine and coastal habitats supported the highest population density in Indigenous North America, allowing the



Graphic map of California Native people's connections to natural resources. Artist: Carl Avery

establishment of large, affluent, permanent villages with complex sociopolitical systems, extensive trade networks, and sophisticated resource management regimes. Marine resources were, and continue to be, the foundation for traditional foods, medicines, ceremony, music, regalia, social ties, and trade economy. Geographic resources are also integral to Indigenous heritage and cosmology including: traditional places of ceremony; centers of origin; the gateway to the afterlife; and ancestral villages and burial complexes (both coastal and submerged). Countless sacred sites exist throughout the Coast. These places continue to be honored by Coastal California Tribes who work for their protection/preservation, and are central to traditions such as the Tongva and Chumash traditional tomol canoe journeys back to the ancestral islands of Pimu (Santa Catalina Island) and Limuw (Santa Cruz Island).

## Absence of Meaningful Tribal Engagement in the Marine Life Protection Act and Planning for California's Marine Protected Area Network

The California Legislature passed the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) in 1999 to strengthen management of fisheries, enhance protection of marine habitats, and bolster the State's capacity to manage marine resources effectively.<sup>2</sup> The MLPA directed the State to redesign California's existing system of marine protected areas (MPAs) to "increase its coherence and effectiveness for protecting the state's marine life, habitats, and ecosystems."<sup>3</sup> This law was drafted and passed without Tribal consultation or engagement, despite coastal Tribes' long history of use and stewardship of marine

 <sup>2</sup> John Kirlin et al., California's Marine Life Protection Act Initiative: Supporting Implementation of Legislation Establishing a Statewide Network of Marine Protected Areas, 74 OCEAN & COASTAL MGMT. 3, 4–5 (2013).
 <sup>3</sup> CAL. FISH & GAME CODE § 2853.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Language from: State of the California South Coast: Summary of Findings from Baseline Monitoring of Marine Protected Areas, 2011–2015. California Ocean Science Trust, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and California Ocean Protection Council, California, USA. (March 2017).

resources and their common interest in protecting and maintaining coastal ecosystems.<sup>4</sup> While one of the six goals of the MLPA considers the 'intrinsic value' of California's coastal habitats, the goals fail to recognize or include the traditional, cultural, or ceremonial relationships between Indigenous people and the ocean environment.

#### Tribes and the MPA Planning Process



Yurok Council Member gives public comment during North Coast MLPA Initiative in 2010. Photo credit: Matt Mais (Yurok)

The planning process to establish California's statewide MPA network occurred through a regionally-focused, science-based, stakeholder-driven effort. MPA design and planning was conducted over several years in four coastal planning regions<sup>5</sup> established by the state: Central Coast (2004-2007), North Central Coast (2007-2010), South Coast (2008-2012), and North Coast (2009-2012).6 Within each region, a local stakeholder group was charged with reviewing scientific guidelines and developing objectives and specific boundaries and regulations for individual MPAs, and proposing alternative regional

MPA networks. A Science Advisory Team informed each regional effort providing both design guidelines and proposal evaluation, and the process was overseen by a state-appointed Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF). The FGC retained ultimate decision-making authority and adopted and implemented MPAs sequentially for all four coastal regions by December 2012.

Limited – and at times absent – Tribal representation was a theme throughout the MPA planning process. There were no Tribal representatives on the original Central Coast regional stakeholder body. In recognition of this oversight, two Tribal representatives were appointed in the North Central region<sup>7</sup> and two representatives were appointed in the South Coast region.<sup>8</sup> Thanks in large part to concerns repeatedly raised by North Coast Tribes as well as the Coastal Band of Chumash and the Wishtoyo Foundation, the State gradually recognized the inadequacy of the MLPA Initiative structure with respect to inclusion of Tribes. MLPA Initiative staff began conducting broader outreach in the North Central Coast region and hosted meetings exclusively for Tribes. In the North Coast, seven Tribal representatives were

https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=107532&inline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Curtis G. Berkey & Scott W. Williams, California Indian Tribes and the Marine Life Protection Act: The Seeds of a Partnership to Preserve Natural Resources, 43 Am. Indian L. Rev. 307 (2019), https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/ailr/vol43/iss2/2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Individual MPA planning/study regions were as follows: the Central Coast (Pigeon Point to Point Conception), the North Central Coast (Alder Creek near Point Arena to Pigeon Point), the South Coast (Point Conception to the California/Mexico border), and the North Coast (California/Oregon border to Alder Creek near Point Arena). https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs/FAQs#27582624-what-were-the-planning-regions

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2015. Overview of Alternative Marine Protected Area Proposals: The Marine Life Protection Act Initiative (2004 – 2012). California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Region, Statewide MPA Management Project. Informational Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> North Central Coast Regional Stakeholder Group: https://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/northcentralcoast.asp

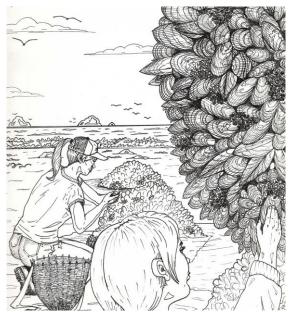
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> South Coast Regional Stakeholder Group: <u>https://www.dfg.ca.gov/marine/mpa/scproject.asp</u>

appointed as regional stakeholders.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a Tribal representative was also appointed to the BRTF for this region to guide the development of policy on Tribal issues.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the North Coast Science Advisory Team established a work group to consider how to integrate Tribal Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into its scientific analysis.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Tribal Take Regulation**

One of the most significant actions taken by the FGC to respond to the needs of Tribes was the creation of Tribal take exemptions in 2011. These exemptions allowed Tribal harvesting and gathering to continue in some MPAs, provided the Tribes seeking this exemption establish a factual record showing "ancestral take or Tribal gathering practices" in that specific MPA and provide it to the State.<sup>12</sup>

The regulation change marked the first time the State recognized the right of Tribal governments and membership to carry out traditional harvesting and gathering for cultural and subsistence purposes in waters under State jurisdiction outside federal Indian reservation boundaries.<sup>13</sup> However, the criteria necessary to qualify for a Tribal take exemption has been called too burdensome by some Tribal members.<sup>14</sup> The exemption was limited to enrolled members of a federally recognized Tribe with a Tribally-issued ID card.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, individuals harvesting and gathering under a Tribal take exemption must hold a valid California fishing license and be in



Representation of traditional mussel harvesting, North Coast Native Protectors Coloring Book. Artist: Tess Krause

compliance with seasonal, bag, possession, gear, and size limits in existing Fish and Game Code statutes and regulations.<sup>16</sup> Many Tribal members and individuals feel these limitations fail to recognize Indigenous peoples' inherent rights to access and harvest in their traditional gathering areas.<sup>17</sup>

Adopting Tribal take regulations demonstrated that the State was willing to listen and adapt to the concerns of Tribes. However, to spur such a change required significant energy and advocacy from Tribes and partnered organizations. Including Tribal representation and consideration at the beginning of a policy-making process will reduce the need for such expense from Tribes. Tribal engagement with MPA

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> California Marine Life Protection Act Initiative: Summary of Input from North Coast Tribes and Tribal Communities Regarding the MLPA North Coast Project 2 (Aug. 25, 2010)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Cal. MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force, Guidance Motions Related to Tribes and Tribal Communities (Mar. 1, 2010), <u>http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=8398</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Kirin et al., 2013

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> CAL. CODE REGS. tit. 14, § 632(b)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Curtis G. Berkey & Scott W. Williams, California Indian Tribes and the Marine Life Protection Act: The Seeds of a Partnership to Preserve Natural Resources, 43 Am. Indian L. Rev. 307 (2019), https://digitalcommons.law.ou.edu/ailr/vol43/iss2/2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Comment heard at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> California has 109 federally recognized Tribes and around 45 Tribal communities which lack recognition (CA does not have a State recognition process/designation for Tribes), <u>https://www.courts.ca.gov/3066.htm</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> CAL. CODE REGS. tit. 14, § 632(b)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Comment heard at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

management, though improving, is still affected by the initial decision to leave Tribes out of the MLPA and the initial MLPA Initiative.

The State's insufficient engagement with Tribes was not specific to the MLPA Initiative. State regulators generally neglected the need to involve Tribes early in planning processes. A key learning from the State through the MLPA Initiative process was that greater collaborative efforts are needed to advance relevant concerns for Tribes. The next section explores some of the ways that California has invested in Tribal involvement with MPA management since the initial MLPAI.

#### **Evolution of Tribal Involvement in MPA Management Program**

The State has made strides to learn from its past mistakes and to continue to develop a mutually beneficial and equitable partnership with Coastal California Tribes within the MPA Management Program. Core to this commitment is the inclusion of Tribal representatives in decision-making bodies, and the support of both Tribal-led research/ monitoring and education/outreach projects. This section highlights areas where Tribal leadership and/or membership has been engaged in MPA management.

#### MPA Statewide Leadership Team

The MPA Statewide Leadership Team was convened by the Secretary of Natural Resources in 2014 as a standing advisory body to ensure communication, collaboration, and coordination among the many entities that have authority, mandates, or interests that relate to the MPA network.<sup>18</sup> The founding membership of the Leadership Team included state and federal governing bodies with jurisdiction or management interests over marine managed areas as well as select non-profit partners engaged in MPA management. The establishment of this collaborative, inter-agency body was intended to address the fact that no one agency or group has the knowledge, capacity or resources to effectively manage the MPA Network in isolation.<sup>19</sup>

In 2018, The Secretary established four seats for Tribal Representatives on the Leadership Team, one for each coastal region. This action was taken in recognition of the need to prioritize Tribal participation in MPA management.<sup>20</sup> Tribal Representatives must be nominated by a Tribal governing body within their region and appointed by the Secretary. They play a leading role in planning and executing the Leadership Team work plan across the four focal areas of MPA management: outreach and education, research and monitoring, enforcement and compliance, and policy and permitting.<sup>21</sup> The four Tribal Representatives provide guidance and assist OPC in achieving the Tribal engagement outcomes listed throughout each of their strategic priorities in the focal areas.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ocean Protection Council - Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team webpage, <u>https://www.opc.ca.gov/programs-summary/marine-protected-areas/partnerships/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team. (2018). Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team Work Plan Fiscal Year 18/19-20/21,

http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\_items/20181025/Item4a\_Exhibit%20A\_MSLT-Work-Plan-Design-FINAL\_10.15.18.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team Charter (2020),

https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/\_media\_library/2021/04/MSLT\_Charter\_Final.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team. (2021). Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team Work Plan Fiscal Year 21/22-24/24,

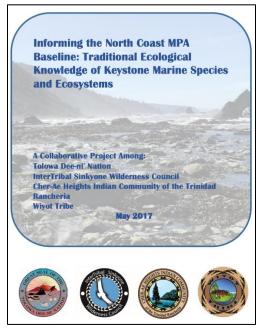
https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/\_media\_library/2022/02/MSLT\_WorkPlan\_FINAL\_02.04.22-1.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team. (2021). Marine Protected Area Statewide Leadership Team Work Plan Fiscal Year 21/22-24/25. Sacramento, California.

#### Tribal Marine Stewards Network<sup>23</sup>

The Tribal Marine Stewards Network (TMSN) pilot program was established in 2020 and in 2022 was composed of four partner Tribes (Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Resighini Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band), supported by two non-governmental organizations (California Indian Environmental Alliance and Ecotrust) and focused on MPA monitoring. Under an initial grant from OPC, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network was funded to work closely with OPC, CDFW, and other partners to accomplish the following tasks: Identify shared priorities and build Tribal capacity, conduct research and monitoring activities, engage with the broader Tribal community and conduct outreach, collect, store, and share data and knowledge, and create a plan for scaling up.

The TMSN is currently focused on MPA monitoring, gathering Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, Tribal community engagement, and advancing conversations with the state on enhancing Indigenous-driven marine stewardship. The development of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network will enhance the capacity of California's coastal Tribes to monitor and manage their ancestral lands and waters. OPC plans to renew funding for and expand the TMSN in the fall of 2022.



Informing the North Coast MPA Baseline: Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Keystone Marine Species and Ecosystems, May 2017.

#### North Coast Baseline Monitoring

The integration of TEK with the MPA Management Program is a proven concept on the North Coast. A collaborative project conducted from 2014-2017 among the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria, and the Wiyot Tribe applied TEK to inform the baseline characterization for MPA long-term monitoring on the North Coast.<sup>24</sup>

This project represented the first time that TEK had been gathered under the MPA Baseline Monitoring Program. The authors combined participatory Tribal community research with Tribal archival research to determine where and how Tribal community members utilize coastal marine resources. It contributes a highly relevant and groundbreaking study that utilizes TEK to develop a baseline characterization for key nearshore marine habitats, and provides significant historical context for that baseline.

Additionally, two North Coast Tribes collaborated as a co-principal investigator (PI) on three MPA baseline characterization projects: the Wiyot Tribe for estuarine ecosystems and Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation for both the nearshore/rocky reef habitats and rocky intertidal ecosystems.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ocean Protection Council Staff Recommendation - TMSN Pilot Program (2020),

http://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\_items/20200619/Item6a\_TribalMarineStewardsNetwork\_FINAL. pdf. For more information about the TMSN, please visit: <u>https://tribalmsn.org/</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation, Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community Of The Trinidad Rancheria & Wiyot Tribe, Informing The North Coast MPA Baseline: Traditional Ecological Knowledge Of Keystone Marine Species And Ecosystems (2017), <u>https://caseagrant.ucsd.edu/sites/default/files/39-Rocha-Final.pdf</u>

#### **Community Science Programs**

Tribal governments and individuals have also been active in a number of community science efforts that help inform MPA management. MPA Watch is a statewide community science program that trains volunteers to collect data on coastal and marine resource use. Data reports are compiled and released annually for each California coastal region. This data helps inform the management, enforcement, and science of MPAs through a human use lens.<sup>25</sup> Del Norte County's MPA Watch data collection program has been Tribally led since 2017. Tribal organizations, including Eagle Eyes of False Klamath Cove and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation train volunteers and compile annual watch reports. Individuals who have volunteered to participate in Del Norte's MPA Watch program include members of the Tolowa, Yurok, Karuk, and Hoopa Tribes.<sup>26</sup>



Beach Watch activities at the Kashia Coastal Reserve. Photo Credit: Trust for Public Land.

Beach Watch, a partner organization to MPA Watch, is a long-term shoreline monitoring project organized by the Greater Farallones Association. Beach Watch also trains volunteers who collect data on human activity as well as the presence of birds and marine mammals.<sup>27</sup> The Kashia Pomo Tribal government has partnered with the Greater Farallones Association to create a Beach Watch Program for the Kashia Coastal Reserve which runs along the coast of Sonoma County. Staff from the Kashia Department of Environmental Planning led monthly surveys to collect wildlife, erosion, and human use data at the Reserve to contribute to MPA monitoring datasets.<sup>28</sup>

#### **MPA Interpretative Signs**

Another avenue for Tribal knowledge to be celebrated and shared is through MPA signage targeted at the members of the public. The California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (CMSF), the MPA Collaborative Network (CN), and CDFW collaborated to include Tribal content in many of the MPA interpretative signs they install on the coast. So far, at least 18 unique signs about MPAs include cultural information from local Tribes.<sup>29</sup> CMSF and the MPA collaborative network are continuing this effort and plan to install dozens more signs over the next two years.

- <sup>26</sup> Marine Protected Area (MPA) Watch Regional Report Del Norte County January 1, 2021 December 30, 2021
  <u>https://mpawatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Del-Norte-MPA-Watch-Annual-Report-2021.pdf</u>
- <sup>27</sup> "Welcome to Beach Watch" <u>https://beachwatch.farallones.org/</u>

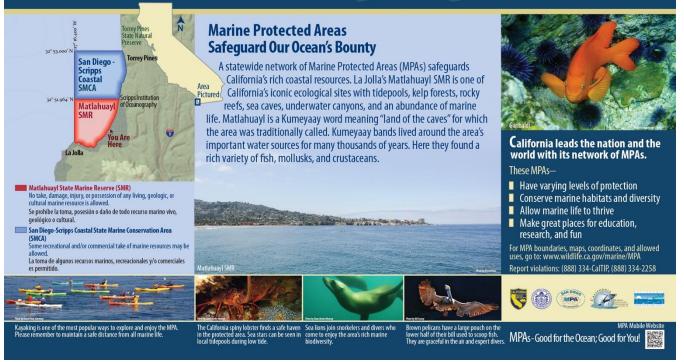
<sup>28</sup> "Kashia Coastal Reserve - Beach Watch Program"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "About MPA Watch", <u>https://mpawatch.org/about-mpa-watch/</u>

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/413190aad9a94720a9176ab940194ff2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> California Marine Sanctuary Foundation (2020), <u>https://californiampas.org/tribalresources</u>

## **Conserving California's Coastal Treasures**



Example of MPA interpretive signage posted at the Matlahuayl State Marine Reserve, which includes information about the Kumeyaay people's connections to this area and also translates the designation of the two MPAs in the Kumeyaay language. Image credit: California Marine Sanctuary Foundation

#### Chumash Tribal Marine Protected Area Education Program<sup>30</sup>

Education and outreach regarding healthy oceans are a shared interest among Tribal and State governments. When in partnership, Tribes and the State have an opportunity to reach and engage with larger and more diverse audiences than would be possible on their own.

The Chumash Tribal Marine Protected Area (CTMPA) Education Program serves as a prime example of a successful Tribal/State collaboration. In 2012, Wishtoyo launched its CTMPA ocean conservation education program and taught the social importance of a healthy ocean environment to 1,959 K-12 school children from Ventura, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara counties during 29 Programs at the Wishtoyo Village and schools. At least 78% of the programs were delivered to K-12 student audiences from Latino, Chumash, and politically/economically marginalized communities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation Marine Protected area webpage <u>https://www.wishtoyo.org/marine-protected-areas-1</u>

The scientific, policy, and regulatory content of the Chumash MPA programs were developed with Wishtoyo's MPA education program partners: CDFW, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, and California State Parks Channel Coast District. The Programs also incorporate Chumash maritime art, traditions, culture, songs, dance, history, and stewardship. By 2015, the program had served over 6,000 students through 112 programs. The program continues to educate Southern California students about the importance of healthy oceans and the cultural history of the coastal region.



Tomol arriving a Limuw (Santa Cruz Island). Photo credit: Teresa Romero (Chumash)

#### Involvement in MPA Collaboratives

Established in 2012, the CN is an organization that supports and facilitates communication and resource sharing between 14 county-based community coalitions, known as collaboratives, working to advance MPA management and local stewardship. The goal of the CN is to engage experts in local MPA stewardship and management by providing the information, structure, support, and inter-agency communication necessary to facilitate the creation of collaborative groups that are uniquely suited to local needs.<sup>31</sup> Tribal governments are sovereign entities that have inherent rights above and beyond the local stakeholders that the CN primarily serves. Preferring direct interaction with the State, Tribal government representatives are not typically active members of their local CN. However, a number of Tribal individuals have found success in utilizing participation in their local collaboratives to advance their priorities.

Tribes throughout California have been active participants in the CN and have taken advantage of the forum to ensure that Tribal perspectives on ocean stewardship have a place in their local collaboratives.<sup>32</sup> One example of how this participation has led to beneficial outcomes is the Tribal MPA Curriculum developed in 2019 by the members of the Del Norte Collaborative in partnership with the Humboldt and Mendocino Collaboratives. Members of the Yurok Tribe, Trinidad Rancheria, and the Tolowa Dee-Ni Nation contributed the toolkit. This teacher toolkit includes lesson plans focused on the intersection of MPAs, traditional knowledge, and Tribal perspectives on stewardship. It also contains place-based cultural curriculum relevant to students in the North Coast region and can serve as a template for adaptation by other California Tribes.<sup>33</sup>

## **Current MPA Management Priorities for Tribes**

This section contains a collection of Tribal priorities and perspectives on California MPA management.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> MPA Collaborative Network webpage, <u>https://www.mpacollaborative.org/about/aboutus/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Guo, K., Hassen, J., Horbat, C., Maloney, K., Sofka, G., & Triebwasser, D. (2021). Enhancing the Legacy of California's Marine Protected Areas through Bottom-Up Collaboration. https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/167367/378 CaliMPA Project.pdf?sequence=1&isAllow

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> MPA Collaborative Network teacher toolkit webpage, <u>https://www.mpacollaborative.org/project/mpa-teacher-toolkit-unit-1-grades-k-2/</u>

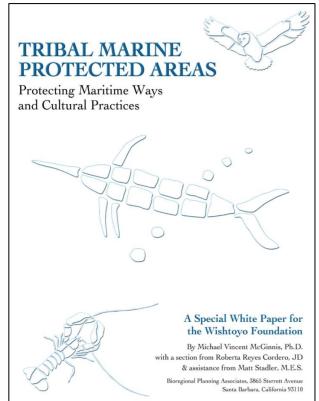
This information was primarily gleaned from online records of public comments about MPA management provided by Tribal members in a number of contexts, including but not limited to: State resource agency public meetings, published reports on Tribal engagement in resource management, news articles, Tribal government websites, and websites of NGOs that regularly with Tribes.

Input on current priorities was also directly solicited through informal conversations coordinated by regionally-based Tribal consultants in partnership with CDFW, a virtual Round Table with Tribes hosted by CDFW in May 2022, and consultation with the Decadal Management Review Outreach Tribal Steering Committee. The major themes that emerged from both the desktop review and direct outreach are captured below.

#### **Co-Management**

Tribes have the expressed desire to co-manage the environment with non-Tribal governments. In this context, Co-management means having a shared decision-making process and equal partnership between Tribal and non-Tribal governments. For years, Tribal representatives expressed a need to restore Tribal values, traditional knowledge, customs and traditions, language, and the cultural ethic of environmental stewardship through co-management.<sup>34</sup>

Identifying and implementing a clear pathway for Tribes to enter into co-management agreements with the State is a top priority for many coastal California Tribes. Tribal representatives have commented on the difficulty of coordinating co-management agreements among many organizations, especially in circumstances that require certain staff or experts on site and authorization from multiple entities.<sup>35</sup> The TMSN was identified by a Tribal representative as a positive example of working towards Tribal co-management made possible by dedicated funding.<sup>36</sup> The current landscape of co-management efforts is explored in a later section of this report.



Tribal Marine Protected Areas: Protecting Maritime Ways and Practice published by the Wishtoyo Foundation (Ventura County, Santa Barbara), 2004

#### Tribal Capacity for Engagement with MPA Management

Many coastal Tribes lack the funding to engage in MPA management with the State. Currently, Tribes are dependent on grants to fund their work in ocean stewardship. Without reliable funding, the long-term planning needed to engage in the potential co-management of MPAs is difficult, if not impossible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Comment from members of the Graton Rancheria recorded at the Office of Environmental Hazard Assessment Climate Impact Listening Session. May 2021; Tribal Marine Protected Areas: Protecting Maritime Ways and Cultural Practices, 2004,

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5459dd35e4b0eb18b9b5599b/t/56bb76be859fd0422da8978d/1455126215 937/TribalMPAsWhitePaper.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Comment recorded at Fish and Game Commission Annual Tribal Planning meeting, July 28, 2021, <u>https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=193323&inline</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Comment from a member of Resighini Rancheria. Recorded during California Natural Resources Agency's workshop on August 17, 2021: Advancing 30x30: Conservation of Coastal Waters

Dedicated, programmatic funding for Tribal marine programs would be a more effective way to support Tribes' ability to effectively co-manage their ancestral lands and waters.<sup>37</sup>

#### Access and Support for Traditional Gathering and Harvesting in MPAs

Tribal representatives have expressed the need to differentiate Tribal subsistence harvest from recreational fishing in the eyes of the State.



Ruthie A. Maloney, Yurok Tribal member, with kwoy (burden basket) gathering seaweed. Photo courtesy of Ruthie Maloney (Yurok/Navajo)

While the creation of Tribal take regulations was a step forward in allowing some Tribes to continue traditional gathering, there is a strong desire for the State to take the next step of categorizing Traditional harvest as distinct from recreational harvest by non-tribal users.<sup>38</sup> Currently, Tribal members participating in traditional harvest activities under a Tribal exemption must still purchase a CDFW fishing license and abide by all applicable fishing regulations.<sup>39</sup> A representative expressed that holding a Tribal ID card should be a sufficient license to participate in traditional gatherings and harvesting on historically Tribal lands and waters.<sup>40</sup>

The Tribal Committee of the FGC is actively taking steps to address access issues. There is support for FGC's creation of a Tribal work group to develop an actionable definition of California Native American subsistence activities that are distinct from "commercial" or "recreational" as defined or used in state statutes, regulations and policies.<sup>41</sup>

#### Ocean Ecological Health and Changing Conditions

Ocean ecological health and changing ocean conditions as a result of climate impacts and overfishing is of great concern to coastal Tribes.

An example of how Tribes are affected is the noted decline of culturally significant species for traditional harvest including: seaweed and seagrass, kelp, abalone, olivella, and pismo clams.<sup>4243</sup> In addition to species-specific concerns, Tribal representatives are concerned by the effects of higher ocean

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Comment from a member of Resighini Rancheria. Recorded during California Natural Resources Agency's workshop on August 17, 2021: Advancing 30x30: Conservation of Coastal Waters

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Comment from a Tribal individual in the North Coast region given in conversation with North Coast Regional Tribal Consultant. May 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> CAL. CODE REGS. tit. 14, § 632(b)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Comment heard at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Comment from an individual from the North Coast Region at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Comment from a member of the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians recorded at the Office of Environmental Hazard Assessment Climate Impact Listening Session. May 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Written comment submitted to Fish and Game Commission by InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. August 2021

temperatures on overall ecosystem health and the potential for harmful algal blooms (HABs) to impact human health in their regions.<sup>44</sup>

Rising sea levels are also concerning because they inhibit the ability of Tribal members to access traditional lands and gathering sites. Culturally and historically significant sites have been, and continue to be, threatened by erosion and submersion from rising seas.<sup>45</sup>

#### Education, Outreach, and Communication

Many Tribal representatives have shared that they are unaware of the ways that their Tribe can participate in the MPA Management program and the Decadal Management Review.<sup>46</sup>



Tolowa Dee-ni' Members participate in research and monitoring. Photo credit: Rosa Laucci

Tribal representatives have expressed a need for more

effective communication with Tribes about the FGC's rulemaking processes, authorities, capacities, and possible support for Tribal needs.<sup>47</sup>

Tribal representatives have expressed appreciation for seeing an increase in the number of State Tribal liaisons in the field while also mentioning that there needs to be more resources and consistency so that stable working relationships can be established.<sup>48</sup>

Tribal members have also shared the need for enforcement agencies to improve their officer education programs in regard to Tribal exemptions. Negative interactions with law enforcement agents who are unaware of the Tribal harvest regulations have been cited by several Tribal representatives.<sup>49</sup>

#### **Enforcement and Compliance**

Tribal representatives have shared the need to enhance enforcement efforts for fishing and harvesting. Enforcement of the rules regarding harvest, especially for species that Tribes rely on for subsistence and cultural practices, is critical to the well-being of coastal Tribes.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Comment from members of the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo Indians and a member of the Scots Valley Band of Pomo Indians recorded at the Office of Environmental Hazard Assessment Climate Impact Listening Session. May 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Comment from members of the Graton Rancheria recorded at the Office of Environmental Hazard Assessment Climate Impact Listening Session. May 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Sentiment shared in various conversations with Regional Tribal Consultants. April-May 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Comment recorded at Fish and Game Commission Annual Tribal Planning meeting, July 28, 2021, https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=193323&inline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Comment recorded at Fish and Game Commission Annual Tribal Planning meeting, July 28, 2021, https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=193323&inline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Comment heard at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Comment heard at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

## **Co-Management and Other Opportunities for Partnership**

Co-management of marine resources between Tribal and State/Federal governments is consistently identified as the most effective way to ensure that coastal Tribes retain their inherent right to stewardship of their historical marine resources. State and Federal governments both in California and elsewhere have recently begun taking steps to create a pathway for Tribes to enter into these agreements.

#### Existing Co-Management Policy in State Government

To support the eventual adoption of co-management agreements, the FGC adopted the following vision statement and definition of co-management in February of 2020:

#### **Vision Statement**

The vision of tribes, is for FGC, and CDFW to engage in a collaborative effort between sovereigns to jointly achieve and implement mutually agreed upon and compatible governance and management objectives to ensure the health and sustainable use of fish and wildlife.

#### FGC Definition of Co-Management

A collaborative effort established through an agreement in which two or more sovereigns mutually negotiate, define, and allocate amongst themselves the sharing of management functions and responsibilities for a given territory, area or set of natural resources.

Since formally adopting the above vision statement and definition, the FGC Tribal Committee has hosted round table discussions on Tribal co-management initiatives and projects during each of their meetings and plans to continue this practice. The Commission hopes to develop a pathway for Tribes to individually enter into co-management agreements with the State and is exploring how best to do so.<sup>51</sup>

#### Examples of Co-management and Government-to-Government Partnerships

Several Tribal and non-Tribal governments outside of California have found success in their efforts to comanage resources and form equitable partnerships. The State has the opportunity to use these examples as resources for Tribal engagement efforts at home.

The West Coast Ocean Alliance is a government-to-government partnership between state agencies from California, Oregon, and Washington and an Ocean Tribal Caucus composed of coastal Tribes across these states. One of their stated goals is to increase understanding of and respect for Tribal rights, traditional knowledge, resources, and practices.

Members of the Tribal Caucus of the WCOA developed a report in 2019 outlining guidance and responsibilities for effective Tribal consultation, communication, and engagement.<sup>52</sup> This document is intended to complement individual Tribes' consultation policies by providing background, context, best practices, and resources for working with Tribal Governments. The WCOA and Ocean Tribal Caucus also hosted a webinar in 2020 bringing together Tribal government representatives with Federal agency staff on the West Coast to learn about the Tribal engagement guidance outlined in the report and discuss

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Comment from FGC Tribal Liaison at CDFW Round Table with Tribes. May 9, 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> "Guidance and Responsibilities for Effective Tribal Consultation, Communication, and Engagement" West Coast Ocean Tribal Caucus, (June 2020).

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc79df3a9ab953d587032ca/t/5f0cdc876f40e375a32305af/159467842244 9/WestCoastTribalEngagmentGuidance\_July2020.pdf

the pathways for integrating the recommendations into existing Federal policies.<sup>53</sup> Implementing the WCOA recommendations would strengthen the partnerships between Tribal and non-Tribal governments and set the stage for equitable co-management.

A collaborative framework for research and monitoring on the Hawaiian island of Oahu provides an interesting example of how California can equitably include Tribes in one of the pillars of MPA Management. Indigenous stewards in the He'eia region saw a need for collaboratively developed research guidelines after witnessing hundreds of projects take place on their native lands, each with their own process to include community perspectives and practices. A partnership was formed between local communities, non-profits, and research institutions to develop Kūlana Noi'i, a guiding document that lays out a set of ideas, values, and behaviors that when applied alongside hard work can build more just and generative relationships between researchers and communities.<sup>54</sup> Kūlana Noi'i includes eight standards that reflect the most common guidelines and best practices for community-researcher partnership found across a broad analysis of local, regional, and international sources.<sup>55</sup> It is intended as a resource to facilitate open conversation and clearly articulated expectations between the community and researchers. Such an approach could prove to be a useful example for regional monitoring programs in California to better include Tribal considerations.

An example of successful co-management in practice in the United States can also be found in Hawaii. The Haena hui, a community group of local Native Hawaiians, worked hand in hand with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) to create a rules package that gave the hui the opportunity to protect its fisheries based on traditional and customary practices that align with the State's marine protection goals.<sup>56</sup> In 2015, the Hā'ena Community Based Subsistence Fishing Area (CBSFA) was formally established by Governor Ige. Since establishment, at least two other Native Hawaiian organizations have submitted proposals to establish CBSFAs.<sup>57</sup> A similar concept has been recommended by the California Natural Resources Agency in the 30x30 Pathways document. If implemented, Indigenous Marine Stewardship Areas (IMSA) would allow coastal Tribes to initiate a government-to-government process with relevant agencies to develop conservation parameters that prioritize Tribal considerations and involvement.<sup>58</sup>

Worldwide, there are models for effective Indigenous conservation and co-management partnerships with federal and other governmental partners that acknowledge the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples for managing coastal waters. Partnerships such as the Coastal Guardian Watchmen<sup>59</sup> in British Columbia, Canada and the Land and Sea Rangers<sup>60</sup> in Queensland, Australia,

<sup>59</sup> Coastal First Nations website. <u>https://coastalfirstnations.ca/our-stewardship/coastal-guardian-watchmen/</u>
 <sup>60</sup>Queensland Government, Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger webpage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> West Coast Ocean Alliance Tribal Engagement Webpage. <u>https://westcoastoceanalliance.org/tribal-engagement</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> "Kūlana Noi'i" University of Hawaii Sea Grant https://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/kulana-noii/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Kūlana Noi'i Working Group. 2021. Kūlana Noi'i v. 2. University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program, Honolulu, Hawai'i.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> "Hawaii's First Ever Community Based Fisheries Subsistence Area Will Be in Haena." *Hawaii Reporter*, 26 Oct. 2014, <u>https://www.hawaiireporter.com/hawaiis-first-ever-community-based-fisheries-subsistence-area-will-be-in-haena/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> State of Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources website. <u>https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dar/fishing/fishing-regulations/regulated-areas/regulated-fishing-areas-on-kauai/</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> California Natural Resources Agency. Pathways to 30x30 California Accelerating Conservation of California's Nature. April 2022.

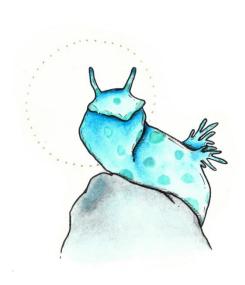
https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/plants-animals/conservation/community/land-sea-rangers/about-rangers

have proven effective in acknowledging the role Indigenous nations have in working with other governments towards conservation goals for a healthy ocean. The Tribal Marine Stewards Network in California has drawn on some of these models for their program.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations for the meaningful inclusion of Coastal California Tribes in MPA policy and management have been compiled from existing reports and adapted to reflect the areas of priority identified in the desktop review, in conversations with Tribal membership, and at the Round Table with Tribes.

#### Improve State Agencies Tribal Engagement and Relationship Building Efforts



Engage in early and frequent communication with Tribal Governments. Conduct respectful, meaningful, and effective two-way communication before any agency decision is made or action is taken in MPA management. This includes ensuring the presence of appropriate Tribal representatives for a given stage of a decision-making process which can range from staff level input to having Tribal Councils formally participate.

Have an understanding of and respect for Tribal decisionmaking processes. It is important for agency counterparts to be aware of Tribal decision-making processes in order to understand how their own processes and information needs could integrate with Tribal ones. For issues that require input or action from Tribal Councils, agencies must factor in the timelines of council meetings and understand that the goals and deadlines of the State do not supersede those of Tribes.

Nudibranch. Artist: Solange Aguilar (Chumash)

Ensure a transparent and accountable process that provides clarity on agency decision making and the potential for Tribal

Governments to affect the final decision. It is important for agencies to provide clarity around their own decision-making processes and the potential for Tribal Government input to affect the final decision.

A key takeaway from direct outreach to coastal Tribal membership was that many members are unaware of how their Tribes are engaged with the MPA Management Program. The State can counter this information imbalance by implementing the above recommendations.

#### Create a Clear Pathway to Tribal MPA Management

Tribal people should be recognized as rightful, equal partners in the development, implementation and management of MPAs.

Develop and support co-management programs that can enrich Tribal cultural practices and renew traditional values. Co-management programs should also include Tribal people in the monitoring and enforcement of MPAs. The Coastal Guardians in Canada and Queensland Land and Sea Rangers in Australia may provide useful examples to include Tribes in monitoring and enforcement.

Include and integrate Tribal Ecological Knowledge into the scientific processes of MPA management. TEK is increasingly becoming a recognized form of science beyond the Indigenous communities and acknowledged as a source of valuable information used by non-Tribal governmental agencies to inform conservation management and decision-making.

#### **Build Tribal Capacity to Participate**

Tribal governments should be provided with adequate resources to participate in MPA designation, design, and management. More often than not, Tribes lack the necessary resources to participate as equals in formal, government-sponsored negotiations and collaborative efforts. Dedicated funding to Tribal marine programs would support their ability to be effective co-managers of their historical resources.

### Conclusion

As the original stewards of California's coast and ocean, Coastal California Tribes have the obligation to protect the natural environment that sustains us all. To effectively honor that obligation, the State of California must ensure that Tribes can meaningfully take part in all natural resource decision making processes, including the MPA Management Program.

Interviews, surveys, public meetings, and a review of past comments have revealed two major themes in how Tribal individuals view California's MPA Management Program: The State is making progress towards meaningful Tribal inclusion and there is much more to be



Dancers are at Arbor at YaKaAma, Santa Rosa, CA. Photo credit: Elizabeth Billy (Pomo/Wappo)

done before Tribes feel they are equal partners in the shared goal of achieving sustainable coastal resource use. State agencies with natural resource management mandates can continue to make strides towards respecting the inherent rights and obligations of Tribes by: building positive relationships through effective engagement, creating a pathway to eventual Tribal co-management of resources, and building the capacity of Tribes to participate in their processes. While this framework has been researched and developed specifically for those who have authority in the management of MPAs, it can be applied in natural resource management contexts statewide.