

Tribal Wetland Program Plan  
for the  
Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria

Cahto Environmental Protection Department  
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## I Background

The Cahto Tribe of Laytonville Rancheria is located in northern California within Mendocino County on Branscomb Road, two miles west of Laytonville California on Highway 101. This 200-acres of land was originally established for the Cahto Tribe in 1908. An ordinance governing assignments of land on the Laytonville Rancheria was adopted by the Executive Committee in January 1968. A number of programs are administered by the Cahto Tribe, such as those from the EPA and BIA.

The Cahto Tribe is governed by the Articles of Association of the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria which was originally Tribally-adopted on February 12, 1967 and subsequently adopted and approved by the Secretary of the Interior on July 21, 1967. The most recent amendments were adopted on January 28, 2006 and approved by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on February 16, 2006. The Articles of Association applies to the entire Laytonville Rancheria and provides the Cahto Tribe with powers of self-government, including powers by appropriate code, ordinance, or resolution. The Cahto Tribal Government has the power and duty to: promote the common good and well-being of the Tribe, protect and preserve Tribal culture and traditions, protect Tribal land, water, and natural resources, foster economic development, acquire additional land for the benefit of the Tribe, promote self-government and preserve, secure and exercise all the inherent sovereign rights and powers of an Indian Tribal government.

Water resources on the Laytonville Rancheria are within the Eel River hydrologic unit and include Cahto Creek (a 0.97 mile perennial stream), Ch'oobaagh Creek (a 0.45 mile intermittent stream tributary to Cahto Creek), Schoolhouse Creek (a 0.22 mile intermittent stream tributary to Cahto Creek), Dead Cow Creek (a 0.05 mile intermittent stream tributary to Cahto Creek), the Terrace Deposits aquifer, the Franciscan Formation aquifer, and extensive riparian wetlands along creeks. Cahto Creek is a Waters of the U.S. that flows into Tenmile Creek, which is tributary to the South Fork of the Eel River which flows into the main stem of the Eel River before reaching the Pacific Ocean south of Eureka, California. Within the Laytonville Rancheria, Cahto Creek is a perennial cold water anadromous fishery that supports salmon, steelhead, the northwestern pond turtle, two species of frogs, and eel (actually Pacific lamprey).

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The water quality and quantity of waterbodies on the Laytonville Rancheria are critical to the health and welfare of the Cahto Tribe. The Cahto Tribe has asserted its authority to protect these precious water resources through establishment of the Cahto Environmental Protection Department. There are two water quality enactments directed at water quality protection. The first enactment is a water quality ordinance was approved on April 27, 2001 and prohibits the discharge of any pollutants into the waters within the Laytonville Rancheria. The second enactment is a water quality resolution that was approved on February 22, 2006 and adopted water quality standards for Tribal waters contained in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Laytonville Rancheria*.

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## **II Overall Goal and Timeframe for the Tribal Wetland Program Plan**

The Cahto Environmental Protection Department plans to develop a wetland program designed to restore impaired wetlands functions and extent and maintain un-impaired wetland conditions within the Laytonville Rancheria over the next five years beginning in 2011 and ending in 2015 at which time the enclosed Tribal Wetland Program Plan will be revised to cover another five-year time period.

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### **III Actions and Activities Supporting the Overall Wetland Program Plan Goal**

#### **III-1 Year One (2011) Wetland Monitoring Strategies and Design**

##### *Action: Wetland Monitoring Objectives and Strategies*

###### Activities

- The Cahto Environmental Protection Department will meet with the Cahto Executive Committee to coordinate development of wetland monitoring objectives and strategies
- Specific wetland monitoring objectives and strategies will be documented to assist in achieving the aforementioned overall wetland program goal

##### *Action: Wetland Monitoring Design*

###### Activities

- Wetland program data and information needs will be identified to meet the wetland monitoring objectives and strategies
- A wetlands monitoring design will be developed that includes a wetlands classification (type) system, GPSed wetland sites, methods to determine the extent (acreage) of wetland resources, and an implementation schedule

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## **III-2 Year Two (2012) Wetland Evaluation Indicators and Quality Assurance**

### ***Action: Wetland Evaluation Indicators***

#### Activities

- Determine indicators that will support an evaluation of wetland resources conditions
- Confirm that these wetland evaluation indicators are scientifically defensible
- Incorporate the indicators into the wetland monitoring program

### ***Action: Wetland Monitoring Quality Assurance***

#### Activities

- Update the Cahto water quality monitoring strategy to include the wetlands monitoring design and indicators
- Revise the Cahto Quality Assurance Project Plan to include wetlands monitoring and submit to EPA for approval

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### **III-3 Year Three (2013) Wetland Resources Monitoring**

#### ***Action: Wetland Resources Monitoring***

##### Activities

- Obtain staff training in wetland resource monitoring
  
- Conduct preliminary wetlands monitoring on-site as part of extended hands-on staff training
  
- Conduct baseline monitoring of Tribal wetland resources
  
- Determine effectiveness of staff training for wetland resource monitoring and secure additional training, as needed, to achieve qualified staff
  
- Revise and update the wetlands monitoring program, as needed, based on results of the baseline monitoring of Tribal wetland resources
  
- Determine whether any Tribal wetland resources contain Threatened or Endangered plant species, Threatened or Endangered aquatic (especially fish) species, or support habitat for Threatened or Endangered terrestrial species



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### **III-4 Year Four (2014) Wetland Data Analyses, Assessments, and Reporting**

#### ***Action: Wetland Data Analyses***

##### Activities

- Enter wetlands data into the existing electronic water quality storage and retrieval spreadsheet
- Track trends in wetland resources
- Routinely update and verify the accuracy of wetlands data

#### ***Action: Wetland Assessments and Reporting***

##### Activities

- Conduct annual assessments of Tribal wetland resources using indicators for extent and conditions of impairment
- Include an assessment of Tribal wetland resources in the annual water quality assessments that are currently submitted to the Cahto Executive Committee, the local community, and the EPA

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### **III-5 Year Five (2015) Wetland Regulations, Management, and Restoration**

#### ***Action: Wetland Regulations***

##### Activities

- Develop wetland water quality standards for inclusion into the Cahto Tribe's Water Quality Standards
- Include wetland resources, when appropriate, as outstanding or unique waters in the Cahto Tribe's Water Quality Standards
- Develop Tribal ordinances, resolutions, or codes designed to maintain the quality of un-impaired wetlands to ensure that impaired wetlands functions and extent are not further degraded
- Designate the most effective method(s) of enforcement for Tribal wetland ordinances, resolutions, or codes

#### ***Action: Wetland Management***

##### Activities

- Map the locations, classification type, and extent of Tribal wetland resources
- Incorporate wetlands monitoring and analysis into wetlands restoration success evaluations
- Develop benchmarks and milestones for determining the effectiveness of proposed wetland restoration practices

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***Action: Wetland Restoration***

Activities

- Identify the source or impairment and indicator status for all degraded wetland resources
  
- Document the most vulnerable Tribal wetland resources
  
- Produce a listing of wetland restoration projects for the Laytonville Rancheria
  
- Prioritize the wetland restoration projects
  
- Submit proposals and secure funding for Tribal wetland restoration projects