

Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation partners with local university on water quality initiatives



Cortina Rancheria Kletsel Dehe Band of Wintun Indians

Williams, California

Project Description

Kletsel Dehe Wintun Nation's environmental department established an extensive partnership with California State University (CSU) Chico that has included water quality monitoring, vegetation sampling, producing a report on water treatment and storage, and the future design and cost-benefit analysis of a rain water purification system. This university collaboration has allowed the tribe to keep current with relevant academic research, better administer their Clean Water Act (CWA) grant, and enhance the department's capacity to identify, establish, and manage a student internship program. The tribe was also able to use the intern's FTE as an in-kind matching contribution under EPA grants.

Project Details

After initial meetings with the Chair of the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences in 2014, the environmental department began the partnership by working with a graduate class to conduct CWA 106 monitoring and draft a report on water purification techniques. The project then expanded to include the school's Engineering Department, which contributed to an interdisciplinary effort to design and evaluate options for sustainable water sources on the Rancheria. Given the tribe's lack of funds for operations and maintenance of a water system and lack of prior experience with these systems, the collaboration will allow Tribal Council to

make a determination on what kind of system they can afford and what to expect.

Community Response

Several Tribal Council and community members were closely involved in the initial needs identification and project scoping process. As the partnership developed, the Tribal Council was kept apprised through meeting presentations and newsletters. The student interns plan on producing a video detailing their findings for review by the Kletsel Economic Development Authority, Tribal Council, and Wintun Environmental Protection Agency (WEPA).

Innovation

This was the first university partnership for the tribe and their first experience with developing and managing a college-level internship program.

Next Steps

The tribe anticipates continuing to work with CSU student interns to develop a rainwater catchment system, produce a Watershed Management Plan, and draft an Invasive Species Report. As the partnership develops further, individual graduate students may be brought on board for longer-term internships or to use this project as a thesis project toward an advanced degree.

For more information, please visit the <https://www.kletseldehe.org/>.

Project Time Period (FY2015-FY2018)

- **Tribal Contact:** Brett Matzke, KERA Executive Director
- **GAP Project Officer:** Kate Fenimore, EPA Region 9
- **Media:** Water Quality
- **GAP Funded Results:**
Consultation & Coordination
Outreach & Education
TAS (or similar) application process



Environmental Concerns

The Rancheria currently has no source of potable water. The Rancheria includes three wells of varying depths; however, these don't meet the tribe's needs in terms of quality or quantity.



Rancheria Location

The Rancheria is located in the foothills on the west side of the Sacramento Valley. The total enrollment is 218 with approximately 20 members living on the Rancheria.

