

**Indigenous Water Talks –
Research on the Santa Ana
and Los Angeles River Environs**

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Claremont Colleges and Tongva Culture

**Water Resources and Policy Initiatives
Annual “Virtual” Conference**

California State University, San Bernardino , April 15, 2021

Land and Water Acknowledgment

- We pay respect to our elders past, present, and future and to those who have stewarded this land, and these waters, throughout the generations. We are still here...



Gift basket woven out of sweetgrass that includes tobacco, 3 Tongva neckties, chia seeds, sunflower seeds, and sage / Provided by Jared Henzler

INDIGENOUS LAND AND WATER ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we live, and the waters that pass through these lands, are the traditional and unceded territory of the Indigenous Peoples, the California Indian Nations, who have lived with good relations for thousands of years here – the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Yuhaaviatam (Yu-ha-vee-a-tom), Tongva peoples as traditional caretakers of Tovaangar (including lands of the Santa Ana River Watershed), the Cahuilla (many Tribal nations south and east of the Santa Ana River Watershed), the Luiseno (south of Santa Ana River), and the Acjachemen (aka Juaneño where the Santa Ana River meets the ocean, now Orange County). The authors of this report acknowledge the past erasures and

exclusions enacted by the nation-state and in the spirit of collaboration and engagement, this acknowledgement recognizes Indigenous Nations who continue to resist, live, and uphold their sacred relations across our lands, from the mountain headwaters to where the River meets the ocean. We also pay respect to our elders past, present, and future and to those who have stewarded this land, and these waters, throughout the generations.

- James Fenelon (Dakota) with Julia Bogany (Tongva, Acjachemen) and Luke Madingal (Cahuilla)

Relationships – self, nation(s), world

- **Serrano, Cahuilla** – (*Chemehuevi*) –
- *Miye yelo*
- (black Spotted Horse)
- *M'de wakantowan Dakota* –
- Lakota (*Howape Luta Win*) –
- Gaelic Irish, Scandinavian, French
- – *Ate waya kin Inyan B/Posdata Okashpe* – Standing Rock, member Native Nation, United States, veteran
- *Citoyen du monde* – global commitment – *mni wiconi*



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Julia Bogany, Tongva elder, culture keeper



Creating the Indigenous Research Team

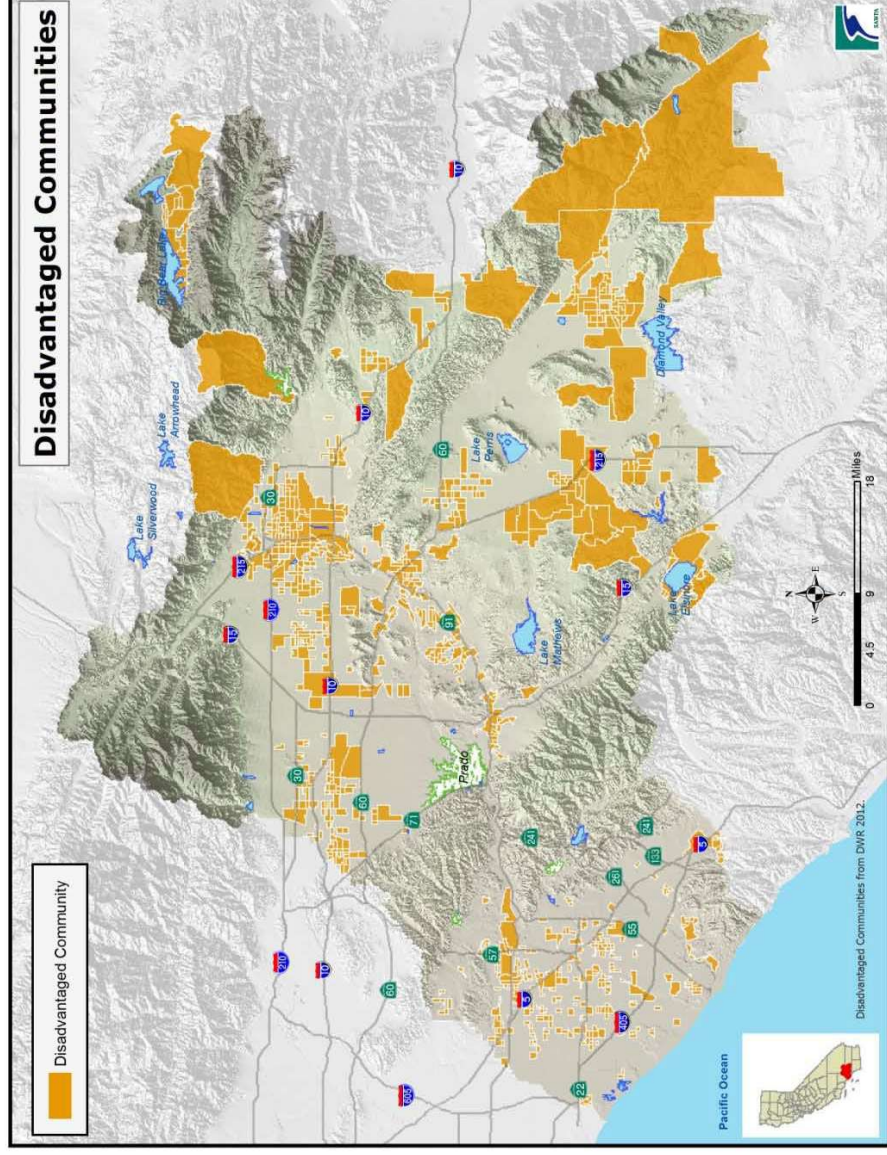
- **Native Team** leaders from the communities, representative, respected and knowledgeable – agreement with WRPI
- Tribal Alliance meetings, Cultural Gatherings, so on, SAWPA meetings, university connections, all my relations
- Research design – borrowed UCI/CSUSB design, developed own IRB, **based on Indigenous knowledge (I-TEK)**
- **Three step process** from a **four step design** – not a two step dance for your relatives



SAWPA & Tribal Nations

- Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
- Santa Ana Watershed (Protection Actions)
- Santa Ana and Coachella Water Protection
- Santa Ana and Region Water & Land Protectors
- Regional Water & Sacred Lands Protectors
- Sovereignty – Water & Sacred Lands Protectors
- Sovereign Lands and Waters Protection

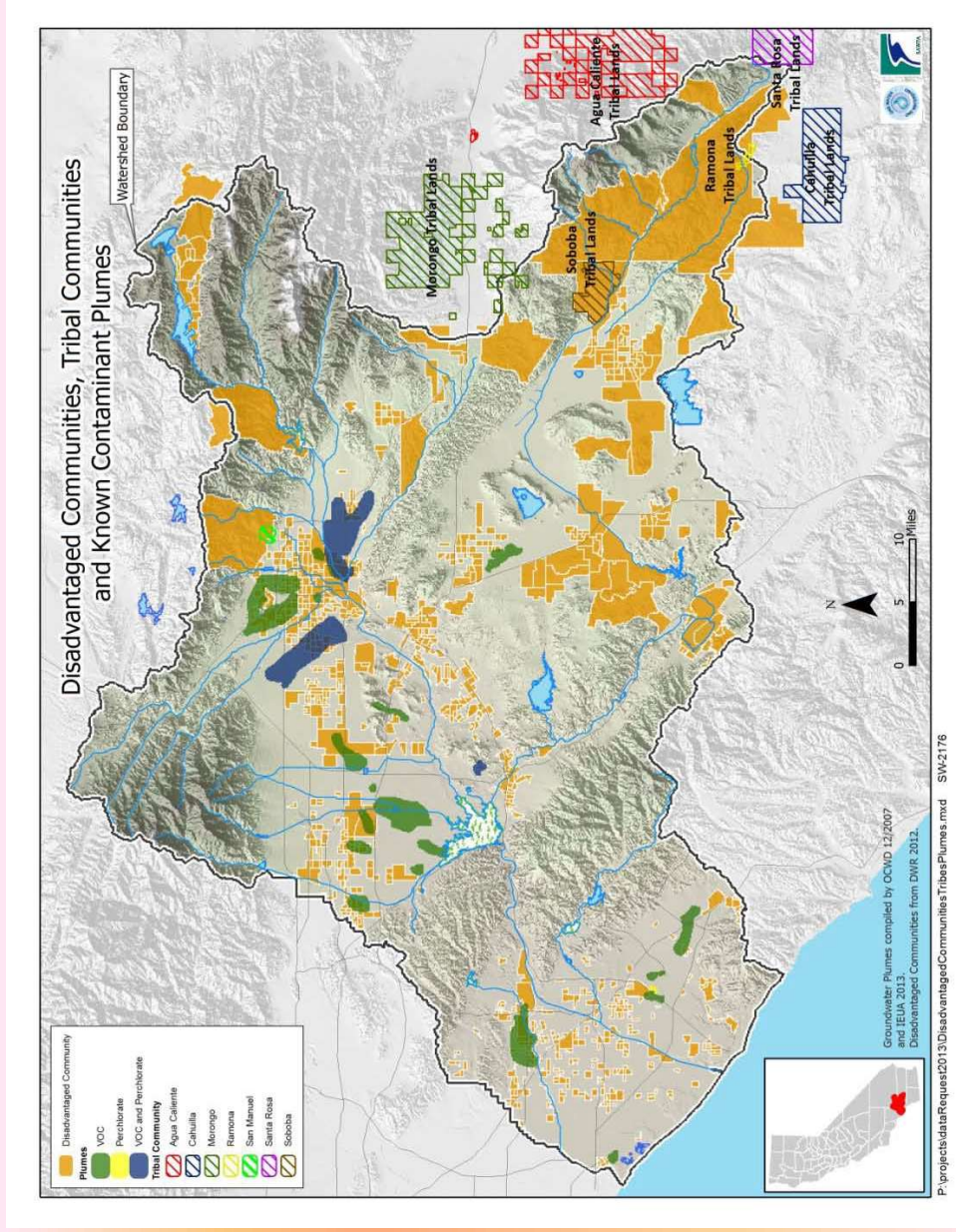
SAWPA disadvantaged communities



SAWPA Tribal Components

- Page – **SOVEREIGN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**
- OWOW planning work the US Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation
- Page – **ACTIVITY TITLE: DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY / TRIBAL PILLAR**
- Activity Categories: *Education, Facilitation*
- Page – **ACTIVITY TITLE: TRIBAL CONSULTATION**
- Activity Categories: *Needs Assessment, Community Outreach, Governance Structure*

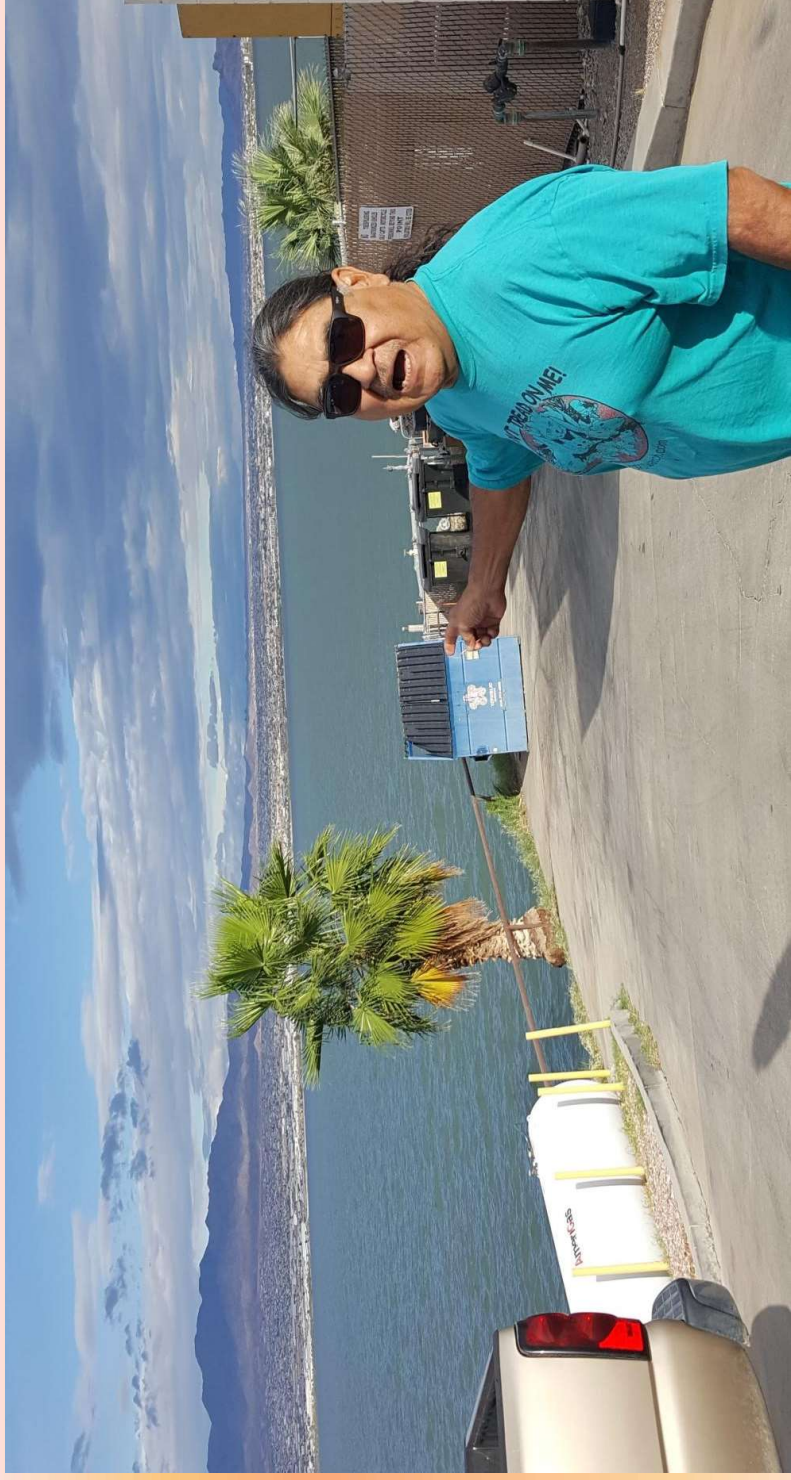
Tribal communities & contaminants



Cultural leaders, Tribal Alliances, Universities

- **1)** Informational gathering and sharing – tribal alliances (4), local leaders, tribal representatives (Matt L consultant)
 - Regional cultural leaders (4) – Luke Madrigal (Cahuilla), Julia Bogany (Tongva), Larry Banegas (Kumeyaay), Matt Leivas (Chemehuevi), myself and Renda Dionne, (others)
 - Universities (colleges) – Cal State San Bernardino (lead), University of California, Riverside; Claremont Colleges; (CSU's)
 - Nations – Torres Martinez, Cahuilla, Morongo, Agua Caliente, (Luke Madrigal only: San Manuel, Soboba, Pechanga, Cabazon)

Matt Leivas – the Salt Songs - Chemehuevi



“Sovereignty, struggles, Water is life...”

**Tribal Alliance meeting
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
May 12, 2017**

**by
James V Fenelon
Professor of Sociology &
Center for Indigenous Peoples Studies
California State University, San Bernardino**

Indigenous Sovereignty – Spirituality

– From Where We Stand (the Rock)

Hau Mitakuyepi! – Indigenous (*Dakota*) greeting

- ***Desert Cahuilla* of Torres Martinez region**
- ***Cahuilla* peoples, Serrano *Tongva* (to West)**
- ***Luiseno, Kumeyaay* (to the South)**
- ***California Indian peoples* (to North)**
- ***Chemehuevi- Mojave* (to the East)**

Humanization “Indians” to Societies / Nations



Lakota, like many Indian Nations, resisted invasion and remember historical events different than US mainstream society.

Here is depicted Lakota repulse of Custer's troops at Medicine Tail coulee, Battle of Little Big Horn, 1876 (post-1868 treaty) buffalo robe painting.

Indigenous history, art, identity, education, and politics differ from U.S.

Listening Sessions – first round – “listen”

- **2) Listening Session 1 – tribal specific invitations and open-ended Native Americans**
 - Tongva Youth Center in El Monte
 - Sherman Indian School in Riverside
 - Processing of session “data” from notes, recordings, and participant feedback from two sessions
 - Assessing and creating Categories and informational points based on cultural viewpoints



Tongva generations related to Land, Water

- Working Agenda
- **Native American / Indigenous People**
- **Listening Session on Water in the Santa Ana Watershed**
- **Related Issues on Land, Water and Cultural Sovereignty**
- April 21, 2018
- Tongva Youth Center
- 4528 Baldwin Ave.
- El Monte, California

Opening session on Tongva land, Cahuilla song

- **Introduction:** 10 am circa Prayer, Acknowledgement, Birdsong
- California State University, San Bernardino – WRI Indigenous Team leaders: (members) – ***Julia Bogany, James Fenelon, Luke Madrigal***
- **Presentation:**
- ***Water, Land and People – Issues from the Tribal Water Summit*** (Luke Madrigal)
- Initial ***Brainstorming*** – Issues and Perspectives
- **Small Groups** – brainstorming and listing of issues and problem areas
- **Whole Group** – sharing initial listings, prioritizing and categorizing
- **Lunch** 12 noon or so
- **Debriefing** (and de-colonizing)
- Gifting and **Recognitions**
- **Retire** by 2pm or before

Tongva listening

- Tongva leaders
 - “chief” and Julia’s relative
 - prayers and songs, native introductions, opening statements



Listening session 2nd – Cahuilla led

- **Santa Ana Water District--SAWPA Project and The Water Resources Institute**
- [academic partnership (California State University at San Bernardino) with the Southern California communities driven by vision that sustaining water resources rests on research, analysis and public policy collaboration.]
- Saturday, June 16th from 10 am - 2 pm Sherman Indian High School. (Home Ec dining room)
- **Leader – Facilitator: Luke Madrigal**
- **Native Listening Session on Water – Indigenous Perspectives in Cahuilla land, Riverside on June 16th:**

Agenda

- **Opening Prayer**, Introductions
- **Birdsingers** or Cultural Activity
- Opening Framing of **Tribal Water Issues** (Anthony Madrigal)
- **Listening Session** - one full round, then opening up
 - Possible break-out groups, listening and speaking
 - Lunch (probably working)
- Follow-up listening session, possibly including other Native groups
- Concluding thoughts and Sharing
- **Sending the Spirits** home....

Cahuilla birdsingers open at Agua Caliente



CATEGORICAL Results of 1st Listening Session – Tongva

We found 12 Categorical response areas, accompanying phrases, and 2 Methodological areas:

- **1 Legal**
- Tongva and A M able to reach out as a tribal government to other sovereign people
- Government agencies do not want to recognize/listen to Tongva people because they know its native water and do not want to recognize where its taken from. Atrocity when developers do not divert projects for Native burial and
- **Wasteful companies** take water and trees from land and **give nothing back** to community
- **Federal Recognition**
- CA tribes seen as a **formality** or courtesy to reach out but there is **no “teeth” or accountability** to not following Native wishes about land-use

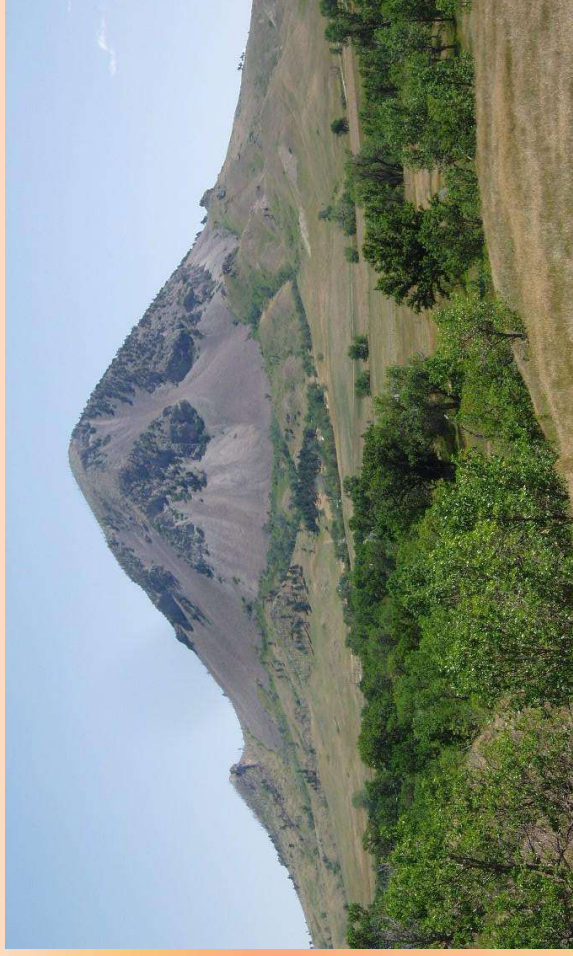
Consultation versus Consent and Citizenship

- **2 Consultation**
- Native people have greater wisdom cause and effect
- Move from “Being a **consultant to decision-makers**” --
A Morales
- Uniting globally, non-native, native, business, scientist, politicians, faith-based, academic
- **Citizen involvement – tribal citizens**

Community to Tribal to State to Federal Recognition

- 3 Societal structures Medicine as Ancient
- 4 Signs of discrimination
 - ceremonial sites
- **Federal Recognition v State v Tribal v community**
- Institutional Discrimination Religious Rights NARF
- Focus on **disadvantaged** communities

Traditional cultural practices are being restored, revitalized (SunDances, as community ceremony, are at “places” – struggles over traditional/treaty lands).



Spiritual (*wakinyan*) landings (to the left), Bear Butte sacred lands dispute (above), near treaty Black Hills in South Dakota.

Spiritual relations to Land, Water, Ceremony

- 5 Spiritual
- Special people designated thank creator with good mind+ ability ask for water, rain with power, hope understanding.
- Wasteful companies take water and trees from land and give nothing back to community – **ceremonial sites**
- More ceremony and practicing religious rights
- Ways of Thinking Blessing Rain Song



Historical Wisdom in Places and Peoples

- 6 Environment
- Historical Wisdom and of Environment.
- ceremonial sites Big Bear, sacred mountain Spirit in Hot Springs
- Tongva support kept a dangerous development project from destroying Bighorn Sheep and migratory bird paths.

Advantage – culture; Dis – class, social power

• 7 Social class Social Class and Inequality

• Affordable housing and homeless concerns

•

• 8 Cause and effect

• Native people have greater wisdom of cause and effect

• Education in School

CATEGORICAL Results of 1st Listening Session – Cahuilla and others at Sherman Indian School

- Categorical Results from Listening Session I at Sherman Indian School
- Cahuilla led – birdsingers and cultural representatives (4 tribes)
- Cultural cohesion
- This picture is of
- San Manuel and
- other singers at
- Cal State CSUSB
- a few years ago



Perspectives

- CATEGORICAL Results, 1st Listening Session – Cahuilla led
- Tongva,

Table 1. Perspectives in Cahuilla Land: Strengths, Structural Challenges, and Needs: Example Quotes

Strengths	Structural Challenges	Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is a rich theme across these communities in respect to their spiritual connection to the Earth and water rights. Recognize that water dictated where people settled and as such we should be mindful that if this is taken away it will impact communities for present and future generations. Water can hold solutions are in our landscape. Recognize that water is part of all communities not just Native/tribal communities. "We don't own it, it owns us" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trends in water management have created barriers for them to connect to the land and water (springs, gates, reservoirs, etc.). Designation of "disadvantaged" is derogatory and often creates barriers to participation in decision making processes. Lack of representation in governmental process means they are often "marginalized" in respect to inclusion on water decisions. Many don't get involved until it impacts them as individuals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community needs opportunities to contribute to water management by sharing their knowledge related to their documented historical records to accurately recognize water and its contributions to communities and help to address how to set balance development with the rights of water (spiritually). They want to learn to "talk water" with water community (i.e. agencies, providers, etc.). Want action oriented results.

Table 2. Perspectives From Tongva and Urban Natives: Strengths, Structural Challenges, and Needs: Example Quotes

Strengths	Structural Challenges	Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historical wisdom of Environment, understand cause and effect. Coordinate and Host outreach summits. Line of communication with Tribal government and other sovereign people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns fall on deaf ears Profiteering water districts steal water to sell back to them. Government agencies do not want to recognize, listen to Tongva people because they know its native water and they don't want to recognize native rights. Agencies and water companies take from the land and do not give back to the land or communities. Discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect for rights and needs. Need to transition from a consultant to a decision maker in water issues. More accountability of companies and government agencies related to water management. Greater understanding of water governance and agency role to build conditions. Unity across all communities: non-Native, Native, government, etc.

Civic leader's Eagle Feather bonnet, on display at Sitting Bull (tribal) College's library (books), on Standing Rock.



Community colleges and universities provide many important educational opportunities help to re-build eroded institutions on many Indian reservations, strengthening Indian nations.

Listening session II – “feedback” – interact

- **3)** Listening Session II – feedback to tribal nations, first group invitations, opened to Native Americans
 - Pitzer of Claremont Colleges – focus on Tongva, peoples from Santa Ana (north) and Los Angeles Rivers
 - Sherman Indian School – focus on the Cahuilla (Mountain, Desert, ___) and Santa Ana River (entire basin area)
 - (initial analysis / findings reported back to tribal peoples from first sessions, new participants)



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Scale of English Miles
Spanish Leagues
Spanish Leguas
Spanish Leguas

4) Emergent projects and proposals from Sessions

Tribal Alliances and cultural group meetings

- **Robidoux Center** – ancient regional trading center, Indigenous plants, food and waterways – Cultural / Tribal histories, education circles, demonstration site
- Tribal representation – Cahuilla (from the 4 directions), Tongva, Serrano, Luiseño, Acjachemen
- **Robert Redford Nature Conservancy** – Claremont Tongva-led information center, clearinghouse – Existing site near Botanical Gardens (proposal not developed)
- **Kuvununga Springs** – Tongva ancient village site at natural springs (L.A. not far from UCLA) – (Gabrieleno Tongva maintained, reception site for meeting Indigenous visitors)

– *mni wiconi* water flowing for the people's health (the essence of all life)



Project proposed – Robidoux (nature center)

- See attachments for the

4 Tribal Nations sign with Catholic Bishops – Kuvununga Springs – facilitated by Julia Bogany



Project possibility – Kuvununga Springs (Tongva)

- Tongva village site – natural springs – teaching and meetings
- Indigenous welcoming protocols – recognition ceremonies
- Native Hawaiian, Maori
- Language, traditions
- Coordinate activities
- Gabrielino Tongva can
- come to agreement,
- separate tribal entities



Leaders who pass on their cultural Legacy



Cahuilla, Serrano, Tongva –
Luiseño, Acjachemen, Chumash
Santa Ana & Los Angeles Rivers

Important Issues arising from the 2 year
ethnographic research project conducted by the
CSU-SB Native Research Team for the WRIP
Water Resources and Policy Institute

Working together for our Native Nations



Re-orientation, Revitalization, Renewal

- Sovereignty – political, cultural, legal, inherent – self determination
- Water and Land – shared with social and spiritual qualities
- Fauna and flora – single ecosphere that humans share, Recognition
- Rivers as flowing – life and awareness – from mountains to the sea
- Inter-Generational – family and youth for a future, Rights
- Dominant society – recognize and follow Indigenous protocols
- Peoples tribal – community orientation inclusivity, reparations
- Song and spirit – inter-connected with all life, mother earth
- First users – nations / tribes, decolonization, ancestors

Calling on the Spirits to Honor the Earth, Water and People who Live on Turtle Island

