



# YUROK TRIBE

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November 12, 2013

Mary Mahaffey, Project Officer  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite 102  
Lacey, WA 98503

Re: Annual Interim Progress Report (Year ending Sept 30, 2013)  
US Fish and Wildlife Service Grant Agreement F12AP00993

Project Title: Utilizing Yurok Traditional Ecological Knowledge to Inform Climate Change Priorities

This Annual Interim Progress Report covers activities on the above-referenced grant for the reporting period ending September 30, 2013.

This report covers activities on the above-referenced grant from the NPLCC for the year spanning Oct 1, 2012 – Sept 30, 2013. During this period of the project, Yurok Tribe Environmental Program (YTEP) project staff complete the following tasks:

1. Yurok Tribe Environmental Program staff compiled educational materials on Climate Change and conducted research of available information from multiple sources on potential and likely Climate Change impacts to Northern California, Pacific Northwest, and Yurok Ancestral Territory including the Klamath River, Yurok Reservation and coastal areas. This information was compiled and shared with community members and Yurok Tribal Councils at Council District Meetings held in the 7 respective Yurok Council Districts in 2013. Community members were asked to identify appropriate elders to select for individual interviews to be conducted for the project. Effort was taken to screen potential interviewees in order to identify those with Traditional Knowledge on specific geographical areas (upriver, downriver, coastal, inland/forest and cultural use areas) in order to help YTEP staff to select a representative group to participate in the formal interview process. During these sessions, scoping on issues of concern specific to natural resources and culturally significant species was conducted and this information was utilized to draft questions to be used in the structured, formal interviews with the selected participants.

2. Consultations with Yurok Culture Committee were conducted in November 2012 and May 2013. During this meeting YTEP project staff presented background information on Climate Change, TEK project, and requested assistance in identifying culturally significant natural resources and appropriate elders to interview during the structured interview process. Discussions on confidentiality and protection of cultural information were the primary focus of this consultation with the Committee. Yurok Culture Committee members explained the role of Traditional Knowledge within Yurok society and how this knowledge belongs to the individuals who hold and protect it, and how it is not freely shared or sharable with everyone equally. Access to TEK is protected, proprietary and considered intellectual property – even when shared with tribal staff. Discussion on use agreements and protection of intellectual property rights for those to be interviewed in the course of the project were a primary concern to elders on then Culture Committee and also by Cultural Resources staff who facilitate this committee.
3. Consultations with the Yurok Natural Resources Committee and its members on the project. These included presentations to the Committee in order to provide background and technical information on Climate Change and our research on CC impacts in our region and likely impacts to Yurok Reservation, Ancestral Territory and natural resources. Consultations with Committee members also included discussions about appropriate topics of discussion, concerns about use and documentation of TEK in this project. Consultations were conducted with Natural Resources Committee members as individuals and as a group in November 2012, February 2013, May 2013 and October 2013. During these meetings YTEP staff obtained input and ideas for focus areas for interview questions with selected participants and assistance in finalizing the list of selected participants and interview questions. Natural Resources Committee identified water (quality and sources) and culturally significant aquatic resources (salmon, pacific lamprey, sturgeon, steelhead, candlefish, shellfish, seaweeds, and surf fish) as species of specific concern. Also of concern are Coastal Redwood, plants used for medicines, ceremonies and basketry, berries and other terrestrial species utilized for food or cultural activities important to Yurok culture and traditions). Many of these discussions also discussions with Committee members on environmental changes observed in their lifetimes. YTEP worked with the Committee members to differentiate environmental changes attributable to Climate Change from those environmental changes attributable to other anthropogenic causes.
4. Consultations with the Yurok Heritage Preservation Officer, Robert McConnell, have been ongoing throughout 2012-2013. Mr. McConnell facilitates the Yurok Culture Committee and oversees the management of the Yurok Tribal Archive where cultural information is stored. Mr. McConnell assisted YTEP project staff in identifying appropriate elders and community members with cultural and traditional ecological knowledge to approach for individual interviews to be conducted for the

project. Mr. McConnell also assisted project staff in developing questions to be used in the interviews of the selected participants.

5. YTEP staff worked with the Yurok Office of Tribal Attorney (OTA) to develop Informed Consent/ Use Agreement Forms and Contracts for interview participants. Meetings with OTA also focused on protecting Yurok TEK and cultural information that could be documented in the course of the project. Use Agreements/Informed Consent forms were developed to include language that reflected the proprietary and confidential aspects of the information, as instructed by Cultural Resources Committee and also as stated in the project proposal and funding agreement for the project.
6. YTEP project staff finalized contract forms and Informed Consent/Use Agreement forms based upon consultations and discussions with Committees and OTA. Questions were finalized and interviewees were selected for the structured interviews. YTEP plans on completing all 10 interviews with the selected participants by January 31, 2014. YTEP project staff also developed base maps using GIS to be utilized in the interview process in order to identify resource areas of concern that may be mentioned in the interviews.
7. YTEP requested a No Cost Extension on the project in October 2013 to account for the schedule delays resulting from significant community and Council concerns on the use and documentation of TEK and the need to develop assurances and protocols to be implemented by project staff in order to protect the confidential and proprietary nature of information that may be obtained in the 10 formal interviews that will be audio recorded and transcribed as part of the project. YTEP project staff feel that we have now developed adequate protocols to protect the intellectual property rights of the individual participants, the Yurok Tribe and developed adequate Informed Consent forms and processes to ensure that all participants and project staff are aware of what is being documented and how it will be utilized in the project. YTEP is requesting a NCE through March 31, 2014 to complete the interview process, the content analysis and the project deliverable: a staff-generated summary report of Yurok priorities for Climate Change research, information on observed environmental changes likely attributable to Climate Change, environmental change over time, and how TEK can inform management decisions and priorities for future research specific to the future viability and survival of culturally significant natural resources and species.

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