

FALL
2003
NEWSLETTER

THE
CULTURAL
CONSERVANCY

PO Box 29044 Presidio of San Francisco, CA 94121-29

UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Native peoples are still working very hard to preserve sacred sites, maintain traditional practices, protect indigenous rights, and educate the global community about our unique histories, cultures, and sovereignties. The Cultural Conservancy directly addresses these critical issues.

In the past year, we have received requests from and worked with native communities locally in California, throughout the Southwest, in Hawaii and the Pacific, and in South America. Please see the program section of this newsletter for more details on those projects. We are proud of the work we are able to accomplish. Due to limited funds, however, we are only able to respond to a fraction of the requests for assistance we receive from native individuals, communities, organizations, tribes, and nations. The last year has been a challenging one for us, as it has been for many small, grassroots organizations. Funding is more difficult to acquire, political opposition to native rights is ever-present and in some cases growing, economic "progress" continues to threaten and endanger ancestral lands and sacred places, and many Indian communities are losing their elders, one of the last generations who remember, know, and practice the "old ways."

The Cultural Conservancy (TCC), over the past eighteen years, has positively contributed to the protection of indigenous rights, the restoration of traditional knowledge and practices, and the regeneration of community health and well-being. Through education, research, public speaking, organizing, advocacy, networking and peace-making, we continue to work for the protection of ancestral lands and cultural traditions and strive to

increase our effectiveness by seeing the limitations of politics as usual and understanding that social change happens from the inside out. Therefore we must look at the root causes of imbalance and disharmony in our lives and communities and work to address such issues as internalized oppression. Phase One of our new Indigenous Health Project specifically addresses this issue. By maintaining and restoring traditional concepts and practices of health and healing, we are uncovering time-tested ways to re-connect to all of our relatives and restore balance between male/ female, earth/sky, nature/culture, matter/spirit.

Whether you are an old member and supporter of TCC or new to our organization and mission, we thank you for your contributions and interest in our work. Please join us on this important journey towards a more just and sustainable world by contributing to the Cultural Conservancy in any way you can.

Also, visit our up-to-date web site www.nativeland.org to find a full description of our activities & programs, links to radio programs & other web sites & resources.

Miigwetch,

Melissa Nelson, Ph.D.

Executive Director &
Assistant Professor of
American Indian Studies,
San Francisco State University



PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES THE STORYSCAPE PROJECT

The Storyscape Project assists Native North American tribes and indigenous communities to preserve and revitalize their stories, songs, languages and lands. We conduct original ethnographic recordings of culture bearers, conduct ethnographic recording workshops, assist in cultural and intellectual property rights, repatriation of cultural resources and protect sacred sites and natural resources.

AUDIO & VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHIC RECORDING & CULTURAL ARTS WORKSHOPS

It is estimated that 80% of the indigenous languages of North America are moribund – not being learned by younger generations. Vanishing are the stories that chronicle family and clan histories, imbue the landscape with narrative and provide original instructions from spirit mentors. Our team of cultural activists, linguists, ethnographers, arts advocates, sound engineers and videographers provide training for tribal members on different types of ethnographic recording equipment, protocols, cultural and intellectual property rights, archival opportunities, fundraising and project planning. These workshops have been enthusiastically received and have led to a sense of empowerment among the participants. Our three-day workshop for the Tribal Digital Village/Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association in San Diego trained over 40 participants in ethnographic recording which resulted in a record of Bird Songs performed at the training used in the tribe's cultural, educational and social programs. Our

trainings provide a template for ethnographic recording designed to be used by the tribes in language and traditional arts revitalization programs.

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES RESTORATION & REPATRIATION PROJECT

(The Guy Tyler Legacy Collection)

"It is an honor to have received such a precious gift that will be used for generations to come. As with most Native American tribes, the Hopi Tribe is losing the ability to speak its native language and the CDs will definitely help the Hopi Tribe's Lavayi (language) Program."

—Wayne Taylor, Jr., Chairman/CEO,
The Hopi Tribe

Guy Tyler was an ethnographer who traveled throughout Indian country in the Southwest conducting historic audio recordings of indigenous culture and language bearers including the only known recordings of Mojave Creation Songs, rare

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IN MEMORIAM, WILLIS MAYO (1913 – 2003)

In June of this year we received the news of Willis Mayo's passing with sadness and a profound recognition of his contribution to Paiute culture. It seems that not too long ago we recorded the Salt Songs at the tribal headquarters of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe. Willis led the songs and provided his invaluable guidance for the Salt Song Project. The result is a set of historic recordings archived at a major institution and provided to the 13 tribes and all the singers. We would like to express our sincere condolences to the family, the tribe and friends of Willis Mayo. We will remember him in our prayers and honor his memory and contribution. The Salt Songs have been recorded for future generations to continue to learn and in this way Willis Mayo will live on in the hearts and songs of his people.



Cahuilla Bird Songs, interviews with Sitting Bull's niece, songs, stories and vocabulary for twenty-two native languages including languages that were assumed to be extinct. Tyler's estate has asked our assistance in the archival of the recordings and we agreed on the condition that we also return the recordings to the tribes where the languages are spoken. With a generous in-kind donation from the University of California at Berkeley Language Center in the form of the technological transfer of the aging reel-to-reel tapes to a digital format, we have archived the entire collection and are in the process of repatriating the compact disks to the appropriate tribes. To date, we have repatriated over 400 compact disks to the Mojave, Chemehuevi, Hualapai, Cupeño, Digueño, Serrano, Navajo, Hopi, Isleta Pueblo, Zuni and Cahuilla tribes and will be providing recordings to eighteen more tribes from South Dakota to Alaska.

THE SALT SONG PROJECT

In Spring 2001, the Storyscape team recorded thirteen singers from thirteen Bands of Southern Paiute Indians in California, Nevada, Utah and Arizona. This historic recording produced six compact discs of the Salt Songs and interviews of the singers and are archived at the University of California. The Salt Songs describe the cultural and ecological landscape of the Mojave Desert region of southeastern California.

As phase two of this project, we are working with Southern Paiute elder Vivienne Jake, who coordinated the recording with Chemehuevi leader Matt Leivas, Jr. We are assisting Vivienne in manifesting her vision and plans to convene Salt Song singers at boarding school sites. Many of the elders we have interviewed have confirmed that the boarding school experience caused great intergenerational trauma that stands in the way of cultural preservation. Many Indian children lost their lives and culture in this tragic period of American history. The Salt Song singers will create ritual at the sites, commemorate the lost children and help their spirits on their way and heal those affected by the experience.



We are working with Vivienne to develop different audio and video segments for her family, tribe, and the general public, regarding Paiute history, language, stories, salt songs, and sacred site preservation.

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE (AIR) PROGRAM - UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, WINDWARD CAMPUS –

In the winter of 2002, TCC assisted Shane Eagleton in getting established on O'ahu, Hawaii where he is an instructor at the University of Hawaii (UH), Windward campus. He teaches wood recycling and carving to Pacific Islander youth and the general community. With support from Dr. Tusi (Samoa) of the UH Pacific Business School, Shane will be working with traditional artists and designing public art and environmental education projects throughout the Pacific Islands. He just received a prestigious grant from Alu Like, Inc. a Native Hawaiian non-profit organization, to acquire a mill and solar-powered wood drying kiln so that he can better utilize all



of the salvaged and recycled wood he has been collecting on the island. He is teaching Pacific Islander youth how to use these tools to make traditional and contemporary art, furniture, and other wooden products.

BIONEERS CONFERENCE, OCTOBER, 2003 –

Shane has again designed and created fifteen beautiful wood sculptures to grace the main stage of the Bioneers Conference and then be sold through a silent auction as a fundraiser for TCC's AIR Program and Bioneers. Shane Eagleton can be reached at: eagleton@hawaii.edu

TIBETAN CULTURAL PRESERVATION PROJECT KONGPO SONGBOOK PROJECT—

The goal of this project is to preserve the endangered Kongpo oral tradition of Tibet, especially its traditional songs, in a recorded (audio and written) format for

present-day and future generations of Tibetans. We have recorded and transcribed over 100 songs that are being compiled into a songbook and compact disc. The book is in the final stages of completion. It will be freely distributed (depending on funding) to a number of Tibetan organizations throughout the world to serve as a special archive and resource for the cultural traditions of the Kongpo region, a place of rare biological and cultural diversity. In February 2003, Tibetan project director Tsering Wangmo was invited to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City as part of the Tibet House of New York's annual Benefit Concert for Tibet. She performed with David Bowie, Ray Davies, Ziggy Marley, Laurie Anderson, and others.

In September 2003, Tsering Wangmo co-organized the special visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the University of San Francisco. His Holiness is looking forward to seeing the completed Kongpo Songbook.



NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH PROJECT & THINK-TANK GATHERING

With co-sponsorship and partial funding from Dr. Leslie Gray, executive director of the Woodfish Institute (www.woodfish.org), we organized a Native American "think-tank" at Eselen Institute in May 2003. Twenty participants, including traditional native healers, health advocates, psychologists, a native doctor, and other native educators, addressed indigenous health from various perspectives. We discussed internalized oppression, current research in alternative and complimentary medicine, traditional midwifery, Ojibwe concepts of healing, traditional plant medicines, and the importance of ceremony for community health. We created the following vision statement:

Recognizing the seriously unbalanced state of indigenous health, we resolve to promote and disseminate a reintegrated vision and holistic practice of Native health and healing for the 21st century.

We are in the planning stage for phase two of this Indigenous Health project and are pursuing funding and partnerships with other organizations, for example, with the Cesar Chavez Institute to address Native American mental health in California.

PUBLIC EDUCATION – EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS (PARTIAL LIST)

CIRCLE OF STORIES –With support from the Independent Television Service and PBS, we worked with filmmakers Jilann Spitzmiller and Hank Rogerson of Philomath Films to produce an award-winning web site entitled Circle of Stories hosted by PBS as part of their Native Stories/ Community Voices project. The web site, featured at the Sundance Film Festival, explores storytelling from the perspective of four indigenous culture bearers. The site includes teacher's guides and curricula and resources for research. Visit the site at www.pbs.org/circleofstories

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

REVITALIZATION – special issue of *ReVision – A Journal of Consciousness and Transformation*, edited by Melissa Nelson, November 2002. This issue features six articles by prominent Native American linguists, California language advocates, indigenous rights activists, and anthropologists. Melissa Nelson wrote the Introduction, co-authored, “Storyscapes: Living Songs in Native Lands,” with Phil Klasky, and published an interview with California Indian artist/language advocate L. Frank Manriquez. The journal has been distributed nationally and has received favorable reviews. To order a copy contact: Heldref Publications, 1-800-365-9753 or www.heldref.org/html/rev.html

2ND ANNUAL WOODFISH PRIZE–

April 2003, Thoreau Center, Presidio of San Francisco. We co-sponsored and hosted the Woodfish Prize event with Leslie Gray, Woodfish Institute and the Association for Transpersonal Psychology. This prize goes to a Native American and a Euro-American who collaboratively work on a social action project where each person is “reciprocally transformed.” This year’s prize went to Richard Deertrack (Taos Pueblo) and Leah Shainbach.

ANCESTORS OF SIBERIA –

September 2003, Main Post Chapel, Presidio of San Francisco. With Pure Nature Music and Stillwater Sound, we co-sponsored two rare concerts featuring Tuvan throat singers and dancers from the Etelman tribe of Siberia. Elvel, a renowned dance group from Kamchatka, perform traditional Etelmen music and dance. There are only 1500 Etelmen living in the world today. Their music and dance incorporates animal spirits, shaman spirits, spirits of the volcano, and interpretations of folk legends.

18TH ANNUAL CALIFORNIA

INDIAN CONFERENCE – October 10, 2003, Cabrillo College, Watsonville, CA. Phil Klasky gave a talk on “Revitalizing the Storyscapes of Native California,” for a panel entitled Radical Preservation of Sites.

TITO LA ROSA, PERUVIAN FLUTIST AND SOUND HEALER IN CONCERT -

October 13, 2003, Indigenous Peoples Day, Main Post Chapel in the Presidio of San Francisco. Tito la Rosa, a descendent of Quechua Indians of the Peruvian Andes, is a musician of Incan and pre-Incan wind instruments. For more than a decade, la Rosa, has been recovering and preserving, studying, and intuiting the ancestral music of Peru.

A JOURNEY TO THE XAVANTE INDIANS OF BRAZIL –

October 14, 2003, Pena Pachamama Restaurant, San Francisco, CA. Phil Klasky gave a talk and slide show on his experience working with the Xavante tribe of Brazil on their struggle to protect their culture and lands from destructive external forces.



ALL MY RELATIONS:

INDIGENOUS VISION – October 17, 2003, Bioneers Conference, San Rafael, CA. Melissa Nelson moderated a workshop with Oren Lyons (Onandaga Council of Chiefs), Winona LaDuke (Anishinabe leader/activist) and John Mohawk (Turtle Clan Seneca).

FUTURE PROGRAMS & EVENTS:

LIVING VOICES: CULTURAL REVITALIZATION TRAINING MANUAL – as part of our audio/video recording training program, we are developing an interactive, culturally-appropriate, comprehensive training manual to augment our workshops. This guide will be a useful resource for communities to conduct cultural preservation projects independently. The manual will cover a wide range of issues: community-based ethnography, intellectual property rights and protocol, oral literature, overcoming preservation barriers, such as linguistic colonialism, and a detailed primer on the tools of the trade (techni-

cal audio and video). We plan to publish the book and use the proceeds from sales as a way to support our projects.

TRIBAL DIGITAL VILLAGE

RECORDING STUDIO – In 2004, we will work closely with Colin Farish of Stillwater Sound to develop curriculum and design a state-of-the-art computer based audio and video production studio for the Southern California Tribal Digital Village.

TIBETAN SONGBOOK CD RELEASE PARTY –

in conjunction with Tibet House of New York, we are organizing a special release party and fundraiser for our Tibetan Cultural Preservation Project in New York City.

KASHAYA ORAL HISTORY

PROJECT – This project will gather stories of or about the history of the Kashaya Pomo Indian community, a federally recognized tribe who reside today at the Stewarts Point Rancheria in northern Sonoma county in California. The purpose of this project is to interview Kashaya Pomo elders and tribal scholars from the Stewarts point Rancheria and collect stories about their families’ experiences and interactions with Russian, Mexican, and Anglo-American colonists over the last two centuries. The project is a collaborative effort of the Kashaya Pomo tribe, the University of California at Berkeley, California State Parks, and the Cultural Conservancy. It was partially funded by the California Council of the Humanities, California Stories Program.

NAGPRA IN CONTEXT:

A WORKSHOP FOR TRIBES & MUSEUMS– July 2004, Barona Museum and Cultural Center, San Diego County. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is an extremely important new law. This workshop is co-sponsored with American Indian Studies and Museum Studies Departments of San Francisco State University, and the Barona Museum and Cultural Center and funded by the National Park Service NAGPRA program through San Francisco State University.