



Indigenous Co-Stewardship of Public Lands: Lessons for the Future

Feb. 21-22, 2024

Conference Highlights



This consequential convening of 300 Tribal leaders, Indigenous culture bearers, and public land management agency staff from the places now known as the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and more than **500 others who joined by live stream**, took place at the Graton Resort and Casino in Rohnert Park, California, on February 21, 2024. It featured **ten best-practice co-stewardship models** that showcased lessons learned from communities of practice co-managing National Park, Forest, and Monument lands in present-day California, Utah, Minnesota, and Alaska, and communities of practice in Canada and Mexico.

The conference was aptly framed with a keynote address by **The Honorable Greg Sarris, Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR)**, along with opening presentations by **Samuel Kohn, Senior Counselor to Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs (U.S. Department of the Interior)**, and **Armando Quintero, Director of California State Parks**.

Connections and conversations continued in informal spaces during the conference and, that evening, at a reception hosted by FIGR that included five cultural presentations, one featuring *Chah-pekw O'Ket'-toh* (Stone Lagoon), the first tribally operated California State Park Visitor Center. It also included five cultural displays, one featuring cultural burning by the Indigenous Stewardship Network, an event partner; demonstrations of Karuk and Pomo basketry; and cultural foods tastings hosted by the Native California led Native California Research Institute. The event continued with field site visits to learn about FIGR's co-management of the places now known as Point Reyes National Seashore and Tolay Lake Regional Park.

Background

On Earth Day of 2022, the California Biodiversity Network (CBN) issued a report, *Conserving California: Advancing Science in Support of 30x30* that serves as an appendix to California's Pathways to 30x30 Strategy, outlining research and information priorities to advance California's conservation of 30% of its lands and coastal waters by 2030 with key objectives of biodiversity conservation, access to nature, and climate resilience while embracing a core commitment of strengthening tribal partnerships.

The report was compiled by CBN's Steering Committee with extensive input from more than 400 participants in four topical Roundtables and an Equity Forum with the utmost recognition that since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have stewarded the lands and waters of their homelands and, making partnerships with tribes fundamental to shaping the future of conservation.

The **Indigenous Co-Stewardship of Public Lands: Lessons for the Future Workshop** stemmed from this report as a priority towards **actionable science**, as an initiative to advance a paradigm shift by laying the foundation for robust engagement with Tribes in the establishment of Indigenous-led stewardship of public lands through substantive, and long-term co-stewardship/management agreements ("models"), which will be featured in a theme issue of **Parks Stewardship Forum** publication(s) in 2025.

Co-Stewardship Models Featured

Present-Day California

- FIGR and Point Reyes National Seashore
- Kuruk Tribe and Suite of Agreements
- Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- California State Parks

National Parks in Other States

- Bear Ears National Monument, Utah (various tribes, BLM, and Forest Service)
- Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota (Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)
- Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska (Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

International Models

- First Nations and Parks Canada
- Indigenous-led Conservation in Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico (Mayan Jungle and Mesoamerican Reef and The Nature Conservancy, Mexico)
- Biocultural Governance, Mayan Region of Puuc, Mexico (Mayan and State agencies from Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan)

An Initiative of:

The [California Biodiversity Network](#) in partnership with the [Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria](#) and the University of California Berkeley [Institute of People, Parks, and Biodiversity](#) in support of [California's 30x30](#) movement to conserve 30% of its lands and coastal waters by 2030.



Event Partners:

[California Biodiversity Network](#)

[California Natural Resources Agency](#)

[East Bay Regional Park District](#)

[Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria](#)

[Hispanic Access Foundation](#)

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University of California, Berkeley, Institute for People, Parks & Biodiversity



Event Host:

Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria



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