

Oct. 8, 2025

**Subject:** North Coast Tribal Grants Panel

**Staff Lead:** Justine Massey, Special Projects Analyst

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## Summary

The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) invests in community resilience throughout the state and has sought ways to increase access to available state funding, including for Tribes. As part of the October Meeting, the Council will visit the North Coast and hear directly from Tribes implementing SGC grants in the region. The feedback we receive from Tribal grantees will be used in ongoing efforts to improve our programs.

## Facilitator

Christina Snider-Ashtari – Tribal Affairs Secretary

Snider-Ashtari serves as Tribal Affairs Secretary to Governor Gavin Newsom and leads the Governor's Office of Tribal Affairs, established within the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom on July 1, 2022. Snider-Ashtari was appointed Feb. 19, 2019, by Governor Newsom to continue her service in the Governor's Office following her appointment on Feb. 6, 2018, by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. She has also previously served as Executive Secretary of the California Native American Heritage Commission, appointed by Governors Newsom and Brown. Snider-Ashtari is an enrolled member of the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians.

As a member of the Cabinet, Secretary Snider-Ashtari serves as the Governor's Tribal Advisor and oversees effective government-to-government consultation between the Governor's administration and California Tribes; informs, develops and implements policy directives related to Tribal governments and Native American communities; leads the California Truth & Healing Council and California Indian Heritage Center Task Force; and oversees the Tribal Nation Grant Fund Program.

## Panelists

### Blue Lake Rancheria

The Blue Lake Rancheria is a federally recognized Native American Tribe in northwestern California, along California Highway 299 near the cities of Eureka and Arcata, five miles inland from the Pacific Coast. Within the aboriginal territory of the Wiyot people, the Blue Lake Rancheria was founded in 1908 as a "refuge for homeless Indians." The Tribe was terminated in 1958 and then reinstated to federal recognition status in 1983. Since then, the Tribe has made a concerted effort to rebuild. Today, the Tribe has 100 acres of land in trust and thriving economic enterprises that support hundreds of local jobs, government operations and programs, economic diversification, resilience and sustainability efforts, environmental protection, and a wide array of social services.

Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Round 9 Capacity Grantee: \$250,000

- Through this grant, BLR has been able to hire and train a land acquisition specialist and building organizational capacity to pursue future land acquisition projects. The Tribe has also used grant funds to identify and prioritize agricultural lands for acquisition and develop projects for submission in future funding rounds. BLR is recommended for a SALC Round 10 acquisition grant.

Presenter: Michael Shackelford – Secretary/Treasurer, Blue Lake Rancheria Council

- Michael Shackelford is an elected member of the Blue Lake Rancheria's Tribal business council and appointed as the Tribe's Secretary/Treasurer. Michael also serves as Blue Lake Rancheria's Land Conservation Specialist. Michael has also served as president on the Blue Lake Rancheria's Board of Education and the Redwood Coast Energy Authority's Community Advisory Committee (CAC). In his roles with Blue Lake Rancheria, Michael has contributed to numerous community cleanup events, participated in Tribal historic preservation endeavors, and partnered with local businesses to assist in the betterment of the world around us. Michael's ancestry is of Tolowa descent through the Brundin family, and he is proud to know Blue Lake Rancheria as his home.

**Hoopa Valley Tribe**

The 85,445-acre Hoopa Valley Reservation in Humboldt County is the largest Indian reservation in the State of California. The Hoopa share it with some Karuk, Yurok, and other Tribes including descendants of Chilula, and Whilkut. The Hoopa Valley Tribe adopted a constitution and bylaws in 1950. The reservation is generally self-sufficient. Timber, farming, and livestock constitute the main economic activities

Transformative Climate Communities - Round 4 Grantee: \$300,000

- Through this grant, the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation is conducting a climate vulnerability and adaptation planning process. The Tribe has been developing tools to encourage community engagement as well as methodologies to set priorities and develop blueprints to implement adaptive measures. The approach is intended to drive community participation and decision-making so that Tribal members are involved in its development and invested and active in the outcome.

Presenter: Jill Sherman-Warne – Executive Director, Native American Environmental Protection Coalition; Hoopa Valley Tribal Member

- Jill Sherman-Warne served as an elected Tribal Councilmember of the Hoopa Valley Tribe from 2022-2024. She also served as a Tribal Councilmember 1995-1997. Sherman-Warne is also the Executive Director of the Native American Environmental Protection Coalition (NAEPC). She regularly works with 28 tribes throughout California, Arizona, Nevada and New Mexico. She graduated from Humboldt State and built her respected professional reputation serving Tribes in a variety of capacities from language learning, vocational rehabilitation, grant writing, environmental planning and emergency response.

**Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of Trinidad Rancheria**

For thousands of years the Yurok, Wiyot and Tolowa people have lived in the coastal redwood forest region of Northern California. The Trinidad Rancheria was established in 1906 by enactment of the United States Congress, which gave authority for the Federal Government to purchase small tracts of land for California Indigenous peoples who were houseless. In 1908, 60 acres of land along U.S. Highway 101 in Humboldt County were purchased for Indigenous people living along the Northern California Coast. The existing Rancheria is within the aboriginal territory of the Yurok people and includes many sacred and culturally significant areas. The Tribe has ancestral ties to the Yurok, Wiyot and Tolowa peoples. All three Tribes traditionally lived in the coastal region of Northern California and share a similar cultural heritage.

**Tribal Capacity Building Program Grantee: \$244,500**

- With increased capacity, Trinidad Rancheria has continued its planning efforts, engaged with the Tribal community and other key community leaders, and worked to develop a data-driven, community-led climate adaptation plan. To build capacity, the grantee has conducted strategic planning for its Climate Program; strengthened existing relationships and built new trust-centered partnerships to facilitate the successful implementation of programs and plans; and engaged the Trinidad Rancheria Community in program development where relationship-building and engagement efforts will lead to the establishment of a Science Advisory Board. Trinidad Rancheria is recommended for a SALC Round 10 acquisition grant.

**Presenter: Selena Rowan – Climate Resiliency Program Manager, Natural Resources Department, Trinidad Rancheria**

- Selena Rowan leads the Trinidad Rancheria's Climate Resiliency Program, a position established through SGC's Tribal Capacity Building funding. She is guiding a community-centered climate adaptation planning process that engages Tribal members, cultural knowledge holders, and other technical experts to prepare for the impacts of climate change on the Tribe's lands, waters, and cultural resources. Her work also includes engagement in offshore wind planning and permitting, and advancing capacity for land conservation, stewardship, and governance across the Rancheria's homelands and waters. Selena was a 2024 Switzer Environmental Fellow and previously worked with the Schatz Energy Research Center, where she completed master's research on fuels reduction operations across California forests through a project supported by SGC's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation. She is a contributing author to California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment North Coast Regional Report.

## Panel Discussion Questions

1. Tribal experience with state investments - How is your work on these projects in partnership with the state improving the lives of Tribal members and the surrounding community? What's working well and how can we improve?
2. Tribal vision for partnership with the State of CA - How can we best achieve a resilient, thriving California together?

