

An aerial photograph of a forest with a complex geometric pattern overlaid on top. The pattern consists of interlocking squares and rectangles, creating a maze-like effect. The forest below is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a mix of tree species and possibly some fire damage or thinning. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

BLUE CREEK FOREST SANCTUARY:
RESTORING OLD GROWTH FOREST
ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION, PROTECTING
SALMON, WILDLIFE, AND TRADITIONAL-
LIFE WAYS AND CULTURE IN THE FACE OF
CLIMATE CHANGE

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BLUE CREEK FOREST SANCTUARY PROJECT

Project Partners



- *Yurok Tribe*
- *Western Rivers Conservancy*



WESTERN RIVERS
CONSERVANCY

YUROK RESERVATION

LOWER KLAMATH RIVER CALIFORNIA

- 44 miles long
- Approximately 1 mile on each bank
- Trinity River Confluence to the Pacific Ocean
- Reservation lands total: 59,000 acres
- Trust and private lands
- Adjacent timber company lands and federal lands



YUOK PEOPLE AND CULTURE



YUOK RESERVATION

MOUTH OF THE KLAMATH RIVER



YUROK TRIBAL FISHERY



- Federally Recognized Indian Tribe
- Yurok Constitution Signed 1993
- >6000 Tribal Members
- Federally recognized fishing rights on the Lower Klamath River:
- Fall-run Chinook Salmon
- Spring-run Chinook Salmon
- Steelhead
- Green Sturgeon

YUOK TRIBAL FISHERY



YUOK TRIBE CONSTITUTION

OCTOBER 22, 1993

Yurok Constitutional Provisions

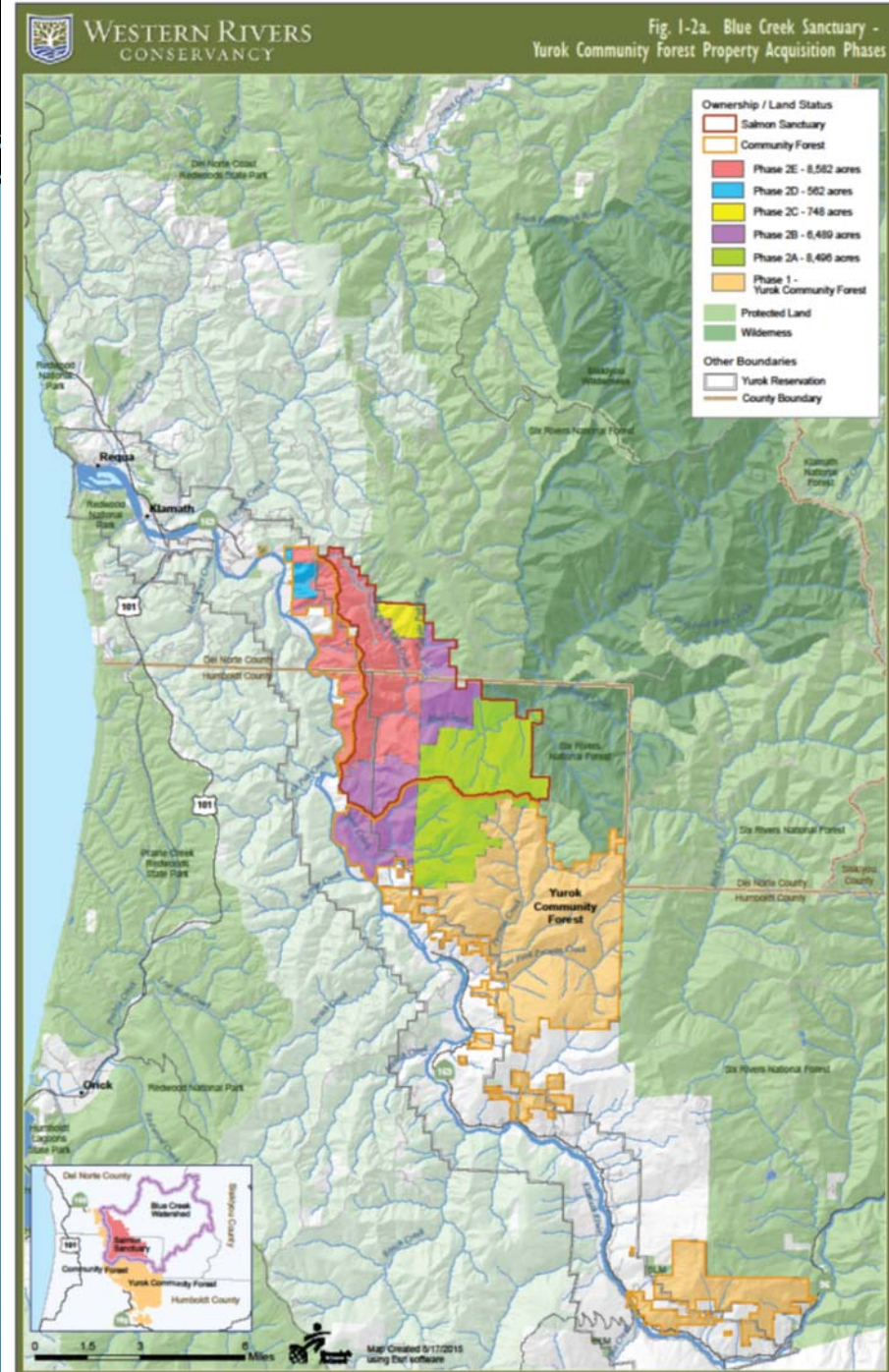
- “The Yurok Tribe is the largest Indian tribe in California, and while much land has been lost, the spirit of the Creator and our inherent tribal sovereignty still thrives in the hearts and minds of our people as well as in the strong currents, deep canyons, thick forests, and high mountains of our ancestral lands.”
- Reclaim the tribal land base within the Yurok Reservation and enlarge the Reservation boundaries to the maximum extent possible within the ancestral lands
- Restore, enhance, and manage the tribal fishery, tribal water rights, tribal forests, and all other natural resources; and
- Preserve and promote our culture, language, and religious beliefs and practices, and pass them on to our children, our grandchildren, and to their children and grandchildren on, forever

BLUE CREEK SANCTUARY AND YUROK COMMUNITY FOREST

Phase 1 Lands: Yurok
Community Forest
(22,237 acres)

Phase 2 Lands: Sanctuary
(24,860 acres)

- Phase Phase I – 2011 (Yurok)
- Phase IIA – 2013 (WRC)
- Phase IIB – 2015 (WRC)
- Phase IIC – 2016 (Yurok)
- Phase IID – 2015 (WRC)
- Phase IIE – 2017 (GDRC)



YUOK TRIBE CULTURAL RESTORATION GOALS FOR BLUE CREEK FOREST SANCTUARY

- Re-establish the traditional Yurok role in the management and stewardship of their ancestral territory to fulfill the aims of the Yurok Constitution and once again have a healthy ecosystem rich in biodiversity and resilient to resource threats such as drought and climate change.
- Utilize traditional ecological knowledge and traditional land management practices, guided by Yurok cultural values.
- Use the best available science, modern technical approaches, and adaptive management principles

DUAL GOALS OF THE BLUE CREEK FOREST SANCTUARY AND YUROK COMMUNITY FOREST (PHASE 2)

Blue Creek Forest Sanctuary

- Lands within the Blue Creek Watershed will be managed as a fish and wildlife Sanctuary devoted primarily to enhancing and restoring the healthy, resilient riparian and old growth forests which once dominated this watershed.

Yurok Community Forest

- Lands acquired within the Bear Creek Watershed and on Starwein Ridge will be managed as part of the Yurok Community Forest that will help provide income for the Tribe while also protecting and enhancing the cultural, wildlife, riparian, and recreational values.

BLUE CREEK FOREST SANCTUARY

LAND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Protect and enhance existing late-successional forests stands
- Restore complexity, diversity, and late-successional forest characteristics to young second-growth conifer plantations and riparian habitats in Blue Creek
- Restore functional landscape connectivity between late-successional coastal and interior forest preserves
- Restore aquatic and terrestrial habitat conditions to levels that support robust, self sustaining populations of native fish and wildlife, including sensitive and endangered species
- Maintain and enhance the ability of Blue Creek to provide exceptional thermal refuge for anadromous fish from throughout the Klamath Basin

LOWER KLAMATH RIVER AT BLUE CREEK



"BLUE HOLE" THERMAL REFUGIA

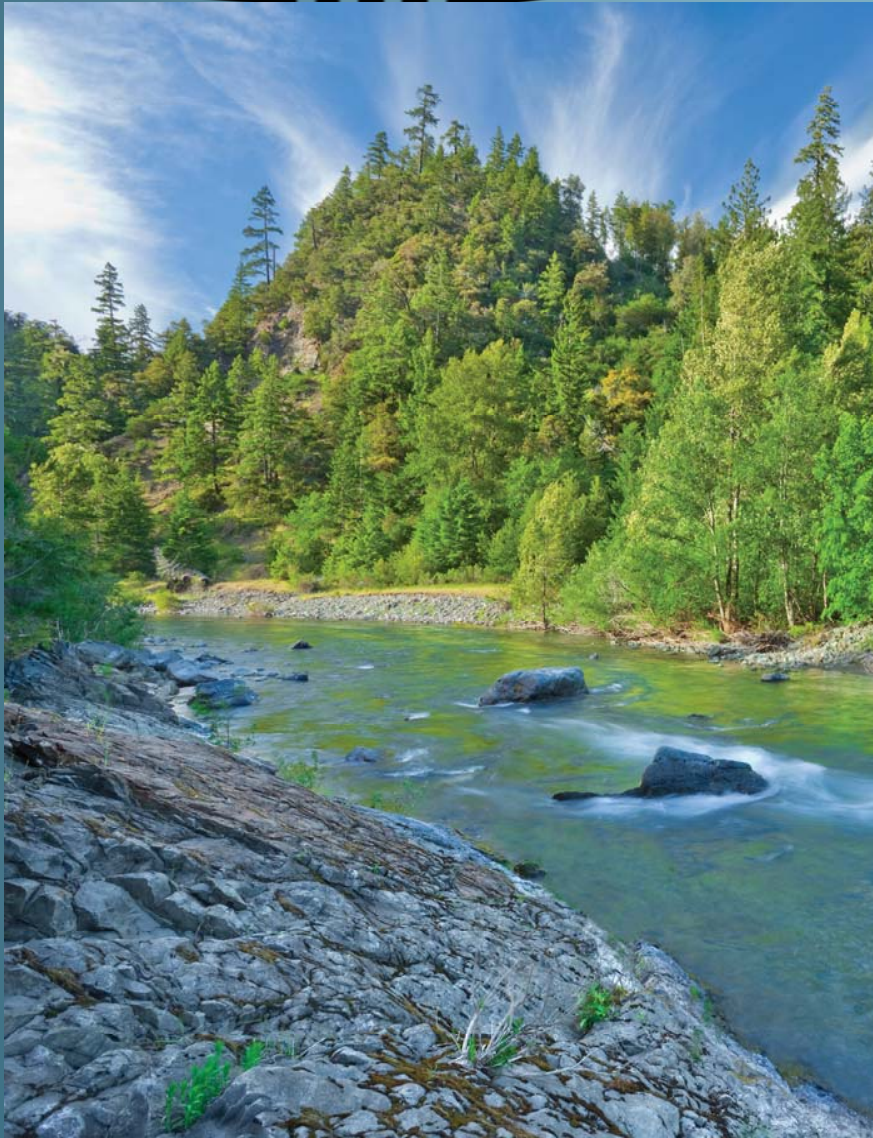


- Major thermal refugia area for migrating adult Klamath Basin anadromous salmonids
- Reduces thermal exposures to elevated Klamath River water temperatures and reduces immune-stress response



- Critical pre-spawn holding and staging area for spring-run chinook, summer steelhead, and fall-chinook salmon

FOREST MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY



- Accelerated development of late-successional forest characteristics through forest improvement projects (thin and release, etc.)
- Implement uneven-aged forest management that precludes clear-cutting, increases harvest rotations, and eliminates herbicide use.
- Increase stream buffers and riparian zone restrictions within the Community Forest to improve habitat for fish and wildlife and restore aquatic habitat integrity.
- Identify areas affected by plant pathogens and implement appropriate treatments
- Manage the forest to increase carbon sequestration

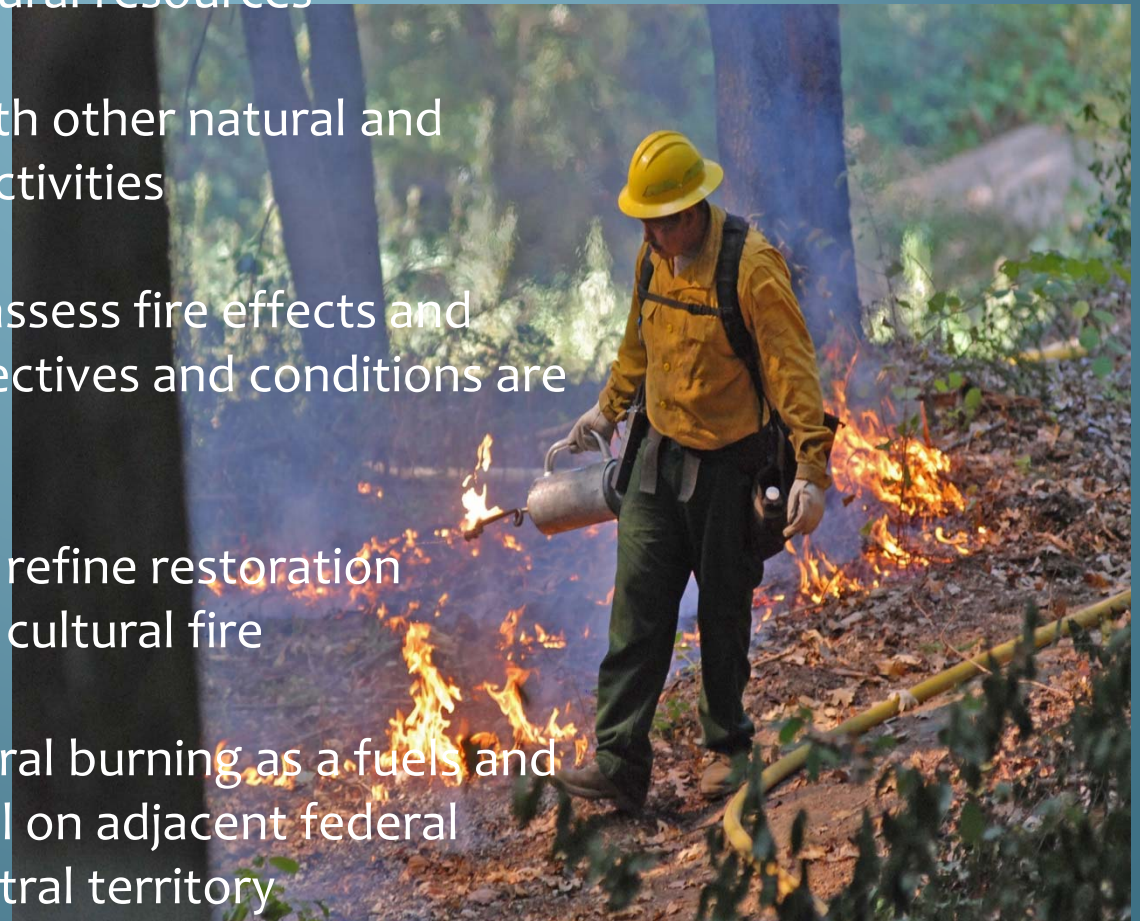
WATERSHED RESTORATION STRATEGY

- Improved road maintenance regime
- Accelerated road decommissioning including full re-contouring where appropriate
- Protect and enhance rare and important plant species and vegetation communities.
- Protect and enhance important existing and potential habitat for special status species
- Protect and enhance aquatic habitats for anadromous and resident salmonids
- Implement process-based stream and riparian restoration techniques



FUELS MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL FIRE STRATEGY

- Restore fire as a natural management process in fire dependent ecosystems
- Reduce wildland fire risks to communities, restore and protect cultural and natural resources
- Integrate fuels reduction with other natural and cultural resource program activities
- Conduct fire monitoring to assess fire effects and assure desired resource objectives and conditions are achieved
- Identify historic prairies and refine restoration techniques; including use of cultural fire
- Implement responsible cultural burning as a fuels and vegetation management tool on adjacent federal lands within the Yurok ancestral territory



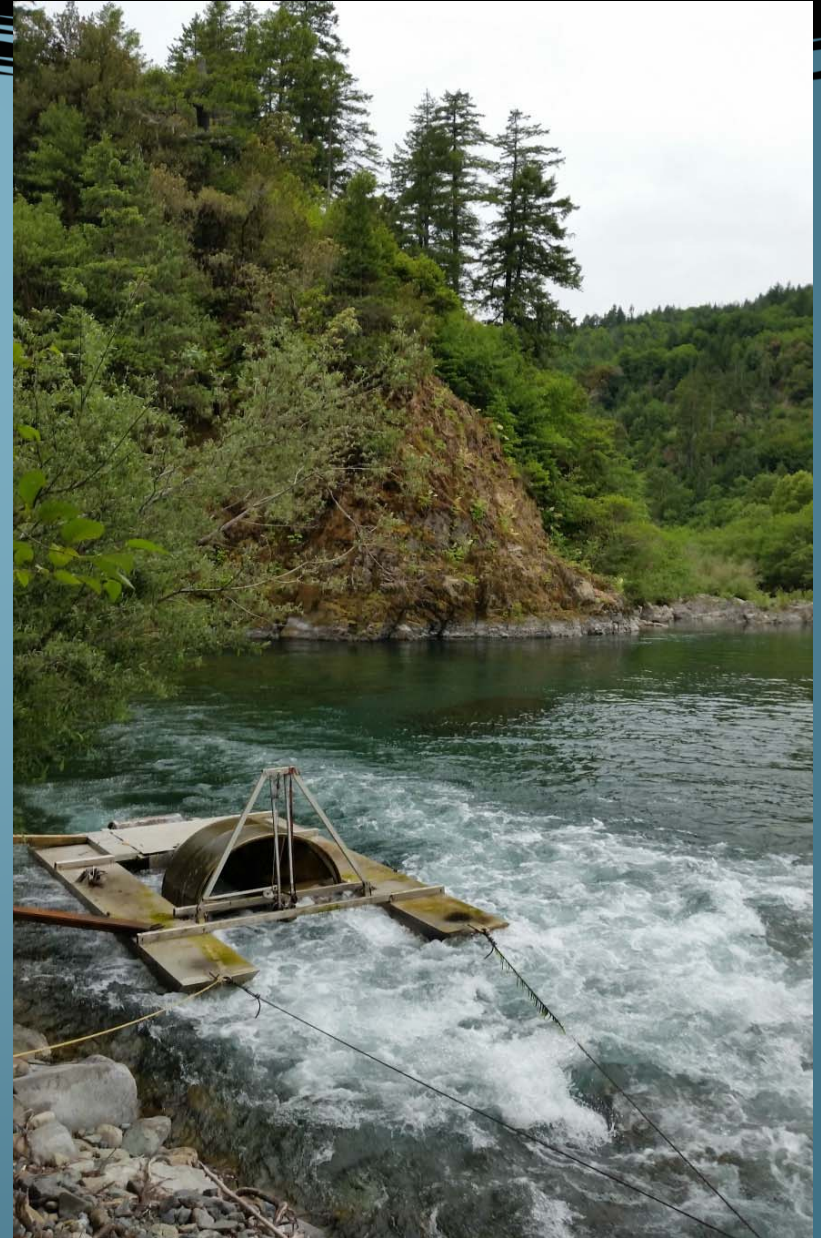
CARBON SEQUESTRATION PROJECT

- California Air Resources Board (ARB) registered project
- Blue Creek Sanctuary (8,350 acres)
- Bear Creek Unit (6,444 acres)
- Total project size: 14,985 acres
- Transferable to Yurok Tribe in 2024



FUTURE WORK

- Finalize Blue Creek Sanctuary Conservation and Management plan
- Integrate with comprehensive Yurok Traditional Land Management Plan (YTLMP)
- Fund Raising
- Implementation and annual Reporting
- Monitoring and adaptive management
- Land title transfer to the Yurok Tribe





QUESTIONS?