

*Floodplain Management Association 2009 Annual Conference*

**FLOODPLAINS AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES –  
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

*Tuesday and Wednesday, September 8 and 9, 2009, Fairmont Hotel, San Jose*

**WORKSHOP AND PANEL SUMMARY**

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**(1) Welcome and Recap of Last Year’s Special Tribal Session**

Iovanka Todt, Executive Director for the Floodplain Management Association (FMA), welcomed participants to the workshop. Iovanka noted that this was the second year that FMA was working to start a dialogue with California Native American Tribes about floodplain and flood management. In 2008 FMA had hosted a special Tribal session at its annual conference in San Diego, during which time participants identified several major issues involving Tribes and floods; a mind map illustrating the results of the session was handed out.

*Note: All materials from the workshop are available online at [http://floodplain.org/tribal\\_collaborations.php](http://floodplain.org/tribal_collaborations.php)*

Dorian Fougères, facilitator with the Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS, then reviewed the day’s agenda and objectives, which focused on discussing critical issues and sharing information. The speakers for the showcase of Tribal management of floodplains had a last-minute schedule conflict, so Dorian noted that the agenda would be amended as the day progressed.

Dorian then invited participants to introduce themselves. The group noted that people came to the workshop from a wide variety of backgrounds and interests, including (1) burials and sacred sites, (2) flood mapping and modeling, (3) habitat restoration, (4) dam relicensing, (5) community and technical assistance, and (4) risk analyses and management strategies.

## (2) General Discussion

Given the change in the agenda and the large number of federal and state agency representatives and professional floodplain managers, the discussion started off very openly. The following points were made by various participants based on their experiences.

- The starting point for productive dialogue is an **understanding of history** – for example, the treaties that were not ratified by Congress, the Rancheria Act, and the Tilly-Hardwick Act. In Central California, the report produced by Colonel L.A. Dorrington in the 19<sup>th</sup> century became the basis for recognizing 40 Tribes in the area, but large chunks of the land – including the stretch from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo – were skipped. *Historically, every inch of California had Tribes.*
- The concept of something being “sacred” is hard to translate and is often too narrowly defined in planning. For native people, the ocean and the land and the animals are sacred – not just buildings. Sacredness also extends beyond today – beyond what people can see and can divulge; it is a way of living.
- **Tribal inclusion in planning** was a major topics during the day. Planning is needed to protect Tribal resources – not just sites but also medicinal plants, gathering areas, biological and cultural landscapes – in case of a disaster.
  - It was emphasized: working with traditional, cultural native people can save floodplain managers money, can help provide critical information up front, can improve risks analyses and modeling, and can expedite project timelines.
  - Numerous Tribes are often involved in a project, given that historically their territories and lands overlapped.
  - Tribes are often left out of General Plans because they may not pay taxes on their lands.
  - Tribal knowledge may conflict with expert knowledge (e.g., biologists, archaeologists).
  - Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act is often ignored.
  - Getting permission for a project is a lengthy process and may involve several Tribes that historically shared use of an area.
  - Tribes need travel reimbursement if you want them to participate. They are asked to advise on numerous projects yet have limited time and resources.
  - Agencies will need to involve a range of staff because the range of issues involved. The specific issues will be site and project specific.
- **The use of consultants** was flagged as a related area of concern.
  - Planners should talk directly with native people who work in the field and understand the land. In practice, however, cooperation is rare and consultants may not be held

- accountable, despite the projects being paid for by public bond money and despite local legal requirements for consultation.
- Agencies should better direct and oversee their contractors to ensure they respect and communicate with Tribes. Clarifying that contractors work for agencies, and that agencies serve the people, is a key starting point.
    - It was noted that methods and standardized costs are needed for paying for Tribal practitioners to work on-site.
  - There are pro-development and pro-native archaeologists. The choice of a consultant needs to be vetted carefully. The best approach is to discuss with the involved Tribes who would be an appropriate consultant.
  - *Where established processes are not working, the ways people think and act need changing.* Best practices and successes need to be documented.
- **Communication and consultation** were closely related topics.
    - Email does not equal consultation. Consultation must be a genuine effort to communicate with Tribes, and start when the planning process starts.
    - Agencies often do not understand Tribal governance and/or who to talk to.
    - Federal agencies do not communicate with non-federally recognized Tribes, even though agency plans may affect Tribes and their lands.
    - The California Native American Heritage Commission's Most Likely Descendent list of contact persons is inadequate. Some of the people listed on that do not know much about their traditional cultures and/or are not accountable to their Tribes.
    - Tribal councils may not represent their communities well.
    - It takes time to build a genuine relationship, have meaningful dialogue, and establish mechanisms for information exchange.
    - Understanding the history of California Native American dispossession and marginalization is the starting point for genuine conversation.
    - Direct dialogue in the field is the best way to develop relationships.
    - Travel reimbursement must be considered for any meetings where Tribal participation is requested.
  - **Records and documentation** may help but are often incomplete.
    - For example, the records at the California Regional Information Centers often are missing materials.
    - Original documents may have gone missing.
    - Tribal descriptions may not be translated into English.
    - The historical relocation of Tribes has also disrupted connections and knowledge.
    - **In order to find information about Tribes in an area, it was recommended**

- (1) Do not stop with the people listed on the Native American Heritage Commission list – the people listed there may not represent their Tribe appropriately (e.g., they may be profiting from traditional knowledge, may be conducting inappropriate reburials, etc). Work to find traditional cultural people who understand the land and appropriate practices.
  - (2) After sending a letter, follow-up! Tribes receive 30 or more letters of request each week from cities, counties, and firms, so no response often indicates that they are overwhelmed, not that they are uninterested. Following-up by phone is therefore the first step. If the Tribe then feels it is a high priority, they will set up an in-person meeting.
  - (3) Arrange an ethnographic study – not just an archaeological survey. Make sure to meet with traditional cultural practitioners, not just Tribal officials.
- **Confidentiality** is a key related concern.
    - Enhanced protection of the information available at resource centers is needed. Some cultural resource managers act unethically. This may include things like:
      - Profiting from selling information that is sacred or confidential
      - Harming sacred sites
      - Overuse of sacred sites as they become popular, new-age places
      - Destruction of traditional plants
      - Inappropriate and illegal access
      - Removing materials from the land
      - Commercializing sacred materials, e.g., “discovery” of new medicines or archaeological materials
  - The National Flood Insurance Program includes Tribes, but only a few Tribes participate. The Program’s list should be updated.

### **(3) Overview of Non-Tribal Floodplain Management in California: Authorities and Responsibilities**

#### *CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES*

Ricardo Pineda, Chief of the Floodplain Management Branch of the California Department of Water Resources, then briefed participants on the roles and responsibilities of his branch. (See pages 6-7 of the workbook.) Major activities include technical support, floodplain evaluation and delineation, floodplain risk notification, and flood risk planning. Chris McCreedy, Supervising Engineer with the Department, then presented on the California FloodSAFE and Central Valley Flood Management Program. Participants then discussed particular issues.

- The Branch develops **flood histories** for different areas. A participant asked how these were created, and emphasized that Tribes had a great deal of historical and practical knowledge that could improve these histories.
  - Ricardo noted that the process of developing these histories was new and just beginning, and offered to send area reports to those who were interested. Ricardo can be reached via email at [rpineda@water.ca.gov](mailto:rpineda@water.ca.gov) or phone at (916) 574-1475
- It was noted that the **Central Valley Flood Management Program** is taking a system-wide view of the Central Valley that includes reservoirs.
- Regarding the proposed raising and associated levee construction for **Shasta Dam**, it was asked whether the areas affected by this proposal were at risk of flooding, and how this would be addressed.
  - It was noted that FEMA does not deal with dams, and due to national security concerns does not map dam inundation areas unless there is a specific request.
  - It was also noted that the levees would likely be built to dam standards, and that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation was probably the project lead.
- It was noted that DWR is looking to strengthen its connection with its **Eureka Satellite Office**, given the work it is doing with Tribes.
  - It was also noted that FloodSAFE has regional coordinators.
- It was noted that DWR can help with the flood component of **Multi-Hazard Plans**, which are a key to getting grant money, and are more encompassing than just insurance for buildings.
- Regarding **Tribal access to State bond funds**, it was noted that a future bond could be written with more encompassing language that could set aside money for Tribal flood safety.
  - It was noted that the State has a responsibility to all the Tribes it recognizes – not just the Federally-recognized Tribes.
  - It was emphasized that a specific language proposal would be needed to move the legislative discussion of this topic.
  - It was noted that agency secretaries or department directors would have to back such a proposal to help move it.
- It was noted that a **statewide consultation policy** is needed for all projects.
- The DWR **matching grant model**, which involve entering into legal agreements and carrying out projects, is not always appropriate for Tribes
  - More creative grant programs developed with Tribes are needed – new ways for obtaining State and federal matches.

## FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Next, Kathy Schaefer, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provided a brief presentation on her agency's responsibilities associated with floods, particularly floodplain management and insurance. Kathy emphasized that FEMA is looking to build new partnerships. Materials on FEMA's responsibilities can also be found in the workbook (see pages 4-5).

- Regarding **FEMA map creation**:
  - They are created either (1) through a combination of hydraulic and hydrological data, LiDar surveys, and stream and field surveys, or (2) DWR is funded to produce the studies and conduct outreach.
  - It was noted that FEMA is **developing new maps**, but this does not yet involve consultation.
  - FEMA is funding a **Trinity River study and model** and would like to share this, including data associated with debates over fish flows and discharge rates.
    - It was noted by a participant that such studies are influential, but agencies typically are unwilling to take responsibility.
    - It was emphasized that agencies must talk to Tribes to learn about these issues.
  - It was noted that Tribes need **training** about how to use LiDar and conduct on-the-ground surveys and studies.
- **Major highways** are built on historical Indian trails, including high spots. It was emphasized that Tribes should be consulted before FEMA contracts with local governments, and that the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) should be involved.
- **FEMA maps often have gaps where Tribes lands exist**, unless the Tribe participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It was noted that these gaps persist because agency people are worried about trespassing on Tribal land.
- In other States, **non-Federally recognized Tribes** must partner with local government to be eligible for grants.
  - California is different from other States. Many Tribes are historic Tribes that are not recognized for political and economic reasons. It was strongly suggested that state and federal agencies need to reevaluate their policies and be more inclusive. As noted earlier, this would improve the effectiveness of agency work and free up funds.
    - It was noted that inclusion has serious repercussions for public safety – fire insurance, for example, may not include Tribal villages, and evacuation notification systems may not exist.
  - It was asked who owns land for non-Federally recognized Tribes, how these territories are handled, and what relationship Tribes have with Federal, State, and County governments in these cases.

- It was noted that land ownership arrangements are diverse and complex. They may include a mixture of fee-title, national forest, and state lands.
- The availability of **FEMA data and access to it** can be improved. At the same time, the original data may be problematic. As noted earlier, it was emphasized that agencies need to talk to Native people, particularly those in the field, to check and improve their data.
- Regarding **Flood Insurance Rate Maps**, it was commented that Tribal areas are often grey on these maps because they are not included. It was asked how floods are then rated for these areas.
  - In response, it was noted that the areas can be mapped as Zone D – a hazard area not studied (like many forest lands). Lenders then require insurance, but it is very expensive.
  - Alternately, floods can be extrapolated based on existing data.
  - It was noted that Tribes could have their land mapped, or could have their land mapped but no community identification number assigned, but they are not required to be in the **National Flood Insurance Program** (NFIP).
    - It was noted that few Tribes participate in the NFIP.
- It was noted that all of California was historically Tribal land, and that flood maps include **traditional lands**. It was asked whether NFIP mitigation grants to Tribes could apply to these areas, but the answer was not known.
  - It was asked whether other mitigation grants (ie., non-NFIP) were available. It was noted that different programs have different requirements. There are pre-flood, post-flood, and flood-related programs, and there is a chance that Tribes would be eligible for Hazard Mitigation and Pre-Disaster Grant Programs even if they did not participate in the NFIP.
  - It was noted that insurance focuses on buildings at risk, while Hazard Mitigation grants can be broader.
- FEMA has now converted many of its maps to digital format and the next phase involves creating **risk maps**, which will be more holistic (e.g., include depth grids).
- FEMA also has **coastal study** money for the first time, which includes wave effects. It was noted that this is another area for collaboration. It was suggested that this work should include concerns linked to energy generation projects.
- It was suggested that the Bureau of Indian Affairs could be an **overarching contact point** for Tribes, so there is one central place to share information.
  - Kathy Schaefer noted she would examine FEMA’s policy on this – whether there could be a federal-to-federal, one-stop-shop for Tribes concerned with emergencies.
  - It was strongly emphasized that the BIA does not deal with non-Federally recognized Tribes, so they would again be left out.

- It was suggested that FEMA convene a meeting in Sacramento with interested California Native American Tribal representative, DWR, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to further discuss issues raised at this workshop.

### CALIFORNIA COUNTIES – SAN DIEGO COUNTY EXAMPLE

Lastly, Sara Agahi, Watershed Protection Program of San Diego County, presented on local government roles and responsibilities (see pages 8-9). Sara used San Diego County as an example of how Counties could work with Tribes, but noted that counties have a lot of discretion in how they operate.

- County officials and staff need **cultural competency trainings**.
  - Flood planning problems will not be resolved until cultural differences are accepted – hence cultural education is needed for floodplain managers, and cultural competency should be required.
- County funding often is promised but falls through.
- The story of **how San Diego developed a flood plan with Tribes** should be shared broadly (see the Panel Presentation from September 9 below for more details).
- **Regional flood control dialogues** with Tribes should be held throughout the State.
  - There is often a mismatch between the scale of institutions and the need to work at regional and watershed scales.
  - Efforts to work with Tribes are often centralized, but Tribes are decentralized throughout the State.
- **NFIP and flood maps** need to be shared with Tribes in affected areas.
  - It was noted that Gilbert White, who helped design the NFIP program, had a vision of inclusion similar to that being discussed today.
- Counties can participate in **FEMA’s technical partners program** and help conduct activities like scoping.
- **New ideas** are needed to change the way that counties work with Tribes, and hence new people need to be sent by agencies to sit at the table.
- **Barriers to including Tribes** in regional and county planning efforts need to be removed
- **Stewardship** efforts need to be taken seriously and given more support.



## **(4) Communication, Coordination, and Consultation**

Participants noted that they had already spoken several times about communication throughout the day. (See the Section 1 above, General Discussion, specifically the communication and consultation and the records and documentation sections.) Participants made some closing observations on the topic during this portion of the day.

- **Person-to-person relationships** are the starting point for working with Tribes – trust is built at a personal level – yet these are always missed or overlooked.
  - This work is almost always personal, cultural, and spiritual for Tribes – not simply business to be conducted.
- Institutions and bureaucracies have structural relationships and approaches, but Tribes are often **less hierarchical and less formal** – this is often misunderstood.
- Agencies seldom not coordinate amongst themselves, not to mention with Tribes.

## **(5) Next Steps for This Work**

Participants had several suggestions about what should come next in terms of building relationships and strengthening the capacity of Tribes to engage in flood planning and manage flooding on their lands.

- With regard to the FMA Annual Conference, it was noted that the Tribal Workshop has been a separate workshop for the past two years. While this brings focus to the discussions, **Tribes also need to be part of the larger group discussions** so that people in the whole conference hear Tribal voices and gain a better understanding of sacred water and responsibility.
- There should be greater Tribal participation at the FMA Annual Conference – in the plenary sessions, the other workshops and panel discussions, and specific Tribal events.
- Developing **locally-based Tribal communication tools and strategies** should be a priority – one approach could involve local summits with County Supervisors and Tribal communities.

## **(6) September 9 Panel Presentations**

“Flood Warning and Forecasting on the San Luis Rey River and Tribal Collaboration”

Sara Agahi, Watershed Protection Program Manager for San Diego County, provided a detailed presentation that focused on two examples of coordination between the County and Tribes. She noted that this work advanced the County's mission of protecting public health and safety.

Highlights of her presentation included:

- In October 2000, the Board of Supervisors created a Tribal Nations Liaison to coordinate with the 17 Tribes in the County. The intent was to strengthen the County's government-to-government relationship with the Tribes, and in turn jointly develop procedures and protocols for addressing areas of mutual interest – regional planning, infrastructure, emergency services, and public safety. The Liaison was given the authority to bring State and Federal money and programs into the region to support the work.
  - Around the same time the County initiated consultation with the Tribes on their General Plan Update, and reviews of private and public development projects.
- Following the October 2007 fires, and the corresponding threats of mud and debris flows, a Burned Area Emergency Response team consisting of the California Office of Emergency Services, California Department of Forestry and Fire, the US Department of the Interior, the US Geological Survey, and County officials, identified tasks to mitigate these threats after fires.
  - Recommendations included an early warning system (EWS) for reservations that was compatible with the County's system. A memorandum of understanding between the County and the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was signed shortly afterwards, with the BIA obliged to install the system and provide maintenance and oversight until November 2010. Afterwards the County flood control district, in collaboration with the Tribes, will incorporate the system into the overall County EWS.
  - The EWS on reservations can display realtime rainfall and flooding, streamflow, and weather information. It sends alarms and warnings in realtime to Tribal emergency managers. The County is currently meeting with managers to determine appropriate warning thresholds.
- The County is also working to build a flood forecast model for the San Luis Rey River. The existing system can display realtime information but not forecast a few days in advance. This will include water surface elevations at strategic locations (e.g., bridge crossings) that will aid in planning evacuations. The maps will be on a public website, while the detailed forecasting information will be accessible to Tribal emergency managers (the information requires careful interpretation by trained professionals).
- The County is reaching out to Tribes during the development of the model. This includes individual meetings, group meetings, and meetings including the BIA. Tribes have brought an enormous amount of useful information and knowledge into the process (about historical water flows and heights, areas of greatest concern, etc.) which have helped to develop the model. The modelers would not have had this information without Tribal participation. A beta version will likely be running later this year, although it will

need to be refined and the County anticipates working with Tribes to do this as well as training them how to use the model, web page, and mapping resources.

- The outreach effort was more *ad hoc* than formal – it did not involve any memoranda. Initial emails and calls did not get much response, and some Tribes were suspicious of the intent. The breakthrough came when the County connected with an environmental consultant who had worked with many Tribes in the area and also had worked for the County in the past. He offered to explain to Tribes what the County was trying to do, and to connect the County with the appropriate Tribal people. These contacts on the County’s behalf made setting up meetings with the Tribes much easier. This underscores the value of someone who can be a relationship broker; without this, it will likely take much longer to build the requisite trust, or the project may not work at all.
- This was a pilot project and the County is interested in developing these models for other watersheds within its boundaries. However, this was before the budget crisis, and it is not clear when more funding will be available. Regardless, Sara explained that she looks forward to additional opportunities to coordinate with Tribes in the County.

#### *Questions and Answers*

- Q: Were non-Federally recognized Tribes included in the discussions?
  - A: We contacted all Tribes in the areas that had been burned and had a flood risk. We had no plans to disturb the land so did not attempt formal consultation. Our goal was to protect the people who live in those areas today.
- Q: Have you had any trouble getting permission to install gauges?
  - A: No, we had already been working with the Tribes before setting up the gauges. If we were placing equipment, we would note where we thought was the best place, and then the Tribe would install it or tell a consultant where to place it. It was a collaborative exercise. Some manage their own gauges, and then relay data to us to incorporate into the county system. Our branch has a very narrow, non-contentious focus, so people seem happy to share and receive data as part of a network.
- Comment: When thinking about consultation this should include not just artifacts and burials, but sacred areas that wouldn’t be noted by an archaeologist. For example, in northern California, there are ripples, creek beds, pools, and rock formations that connect everything around them. So while the flood model may not be setting up machinery, there may be interference with the ability of prayers to go from one place to another.
- Comment: FMA should bring you into speak about how you were able to overcome all the barriers, the perseverance and ability to continue a rational discussion. This is a model for other counties.
- Q: Initially you did not have guidance or documentation. Have you now established this? If not, you should write something so the next person will have a starting point. It sounds like you created some best practices that could be shared and used as a model.

- A: The County has precise language for implementing SB 18, consultation for the general plan updates, and for specific plan updates and the review of public and private development. I also had to go through my chain of command and the County's Tribal liaison to get permission. It might also be interesting to invite the Tribes to discuss whether the project was successful from their viewpoint.
- Q: Have you asked Tribes how you can solidify your partnership and serve each other better? In the north, we'd like to see this tool and would organize a group of Tribal people involved in flood management and salmon restoration to sit down with you and make the tool stronger and more expansive. There are many similarities with conditions in southern California, but also differences. Sounds are also very important in terms of placing equipment, as they may change the sounds of the forest and how we interact with the forest. So finding the least invasive way to place instruments is important.
  - A: I (Sara) would be happy to come up north and talk. It would also be very useful to get the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers involved, which has developed the flood forecasting software and uses it around the country for free – but it's only shared with federal agencies, not Counties. So working directly with the Corps would save thousands and thousands of dollars.
- Comment: We would like to invite you (Sara) and Aaron (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) to come north and talk with us.

### “Flood Warning and Forecasting on the North Coast”

Labbecca Nessier, Emergency Services Coordinator for the Yurok Tribe in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, and Troy Niccolini, National Weather Service, Eureka Office, introduced themselves. Highlights of their presentation included:

- Labbecca noted that the reservation extends for one mile to either side of the Klamath, 40 miles upriver, so is rugged and rural territory that is prone to flooding.
- Troy noted that he has been working on outreach for the past five years and found out Tribes were not being contacted. The threat of tsunamis is what finally brought communities together, because the mouth of the Klamath has the same issues as the Columbia River (e.g., tsunami, wildfire, dam break, and flood hazards, as well as agriculture, instream fishes, water supply, and Tribal fisheries), just smaller-scale. Flooding is a major issue – communities are very susceptible to being cut off from all transportation.
- The Yurok Tribe pursues non-structural, integrated floodplain hazard mitigation activities that include mapping of flooding and floodplains, outdoor sirens, widespread education, evacuation signage and practice drills. These are areas where Labbecca and Troy have collaborated in recent years.

- Troy noted there are challenges for Federal agencies that seek to work with Tribes, including practical and logistical things (e.g., grant writing, on-the-ground labor), but also cultural and interpersonal things.
- Question: How are you working with Tribes even further upriver, like Hoopa and Karuk?
  - Troy noted that last year Labecca took him upriver to increase his awareness, and their next efforts will focus on integrating upriver and downriver activities. Recently Labecca was also hired by Hoopa, so the work is starting. There an enormous amount of work that remains to be done; the National Weather Service has existed since the 1860s, but only now is anyone in this area reaching out to Tribes.
  - Labecca noted that they have been trying to form a Tribal Emergency Management Agency in Del Norte (4 Tribes) and Humboldt (9 Tribes) Counties, but it is very hard to deal with two counties instead of just one, and to find common ground and bring voices together. We have been trying to streamline the process since many contact persons wear several hats. Mooretown Rancheria has a good example of a TEMA that has been around for five or six years, where four Tribes have come together with the District Attorney, emergency managers, public health experts, and Indian Health Services.
- Troy noted that while Labecca has attended the two Counties' Office of Emergency Services meetings for years, they still try and leave her out of their planning. This is one reason why Tribes want their own Operational Area, and then could operate at both the County and State levels.
  - Labecca noted that she has to go to meetings uninvited and be consistent and sit there. It has been hard and a steel learning curve, but people are starting to reach out more. This came to a head in the 2005-6 flood when Highway 169 was covered by water. The sheriff drove into town and said nothing was wrong – but the water system was washed out, roads were washed out, people were isolated. When her boss criticized the sheriff, she was nearly arrested.
- Labecca noted that another major need is cultural competency training for State, Federal, and County representatives. Troy added that he wants people who field calls at his office to understand something about the person on the other end, and understand something about Tribe needs and concerns.
- Comment: The various agencies within the U.S. Department of Commerce and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – the National Weather Service, the National Ocean Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service – should be working more closely together on Tribal engagement on these issues.
- Comment: These issues are not limited to Office of Emergency Services coordinators – they also involve forest and water resources, social services, clinics and hospitals, air evacuation, California Highway Patrol, and the Coast Guard. So as much as you want to

streamline, you need to recognize that many people are involved and they seldom talk to each other – something that also needs to be encouraged when you are building tools and doing outreach.

- Comment: Mendocino has 10 Federally-recognized Tribes and 2 Tribal communities. We have also been preparing for a tsunami, and have a multi-Tribal beach in Mendocino and Sonoma that is very isolated.
- Q: How does your work address climate change?
  - A (Labecca): This is something our department and teams are looking at.
- Comment: Several of us work with Tribal communications, traditional people, water, and other resources, and are happy to offer our assistance. When flooding occurs on major rivers it affects other rivers, streams, and tributaries.
- Comment: When thinking about evacuations, plans for cemeteries and burials are needed, because the uprooting of trees and loss of soil during a flood can destroy these.
  - Response (Labecca): For evacuation mapping we primarily look at vertical dimensions. A few structured trails in population centers can get people to high ground in 10 minutes. Last November was the largest evacuation drill in the lower 48 states; for our part we had 3 sites and worked with the County, National Weather Service, California Highway Patrol, and Caltrans. We evacuated a local school, over 200 people.
  - Reply (commenter): This is a great way to communicate because often two or three generations live in one house.
  - Reply (Labecca): We worked with the 28 pupils, mostly Yurok natives, of a charter school. We brought them in and trained them and developed a suite of materials with high school children. Some taught materials to younger children, some to older children, in various formats. We also presented the material at Smith River, which is vulnerable to tsunamis. We also got a tsunami siren grant from NOAA, which required either a State or Tribe to apply. We keep going to different agencies, and can access some things that State agencies cannot.
  - Reply (Troy): This was something I had to learn – I was viewing the world through a narrow lens, thinking it was up to the State to work with Operational Areas and Counties and the existing structure. Labecca showed me that Tribes and the State could work together to get \$500,000 into the region to help everyone with sirens. This was a better approach for the grant, and for the testing. The previous year only Humboldt County had done a live emergency alert warning system test, and in the second year added public addresses and reverse calling. This was a big friction point because people might not realize this was a test.
- Troy noted he also learned (1) to make no assumptions regarding Tribal government, and (2) to refrain from applying any cultural perspective to that of Tribal culture – what someone might consider isolated someone else might consider the center of the world.

He now tries to teach his colleagues to do the same and to be inclusive of Tribes in their efforts – like a recent State effort to develop tsunami inundation maps, where initial outreach was only to the Operational Areas. Agencies do not yet automatically think of Tribes as entities they work with and work for, and should include in any project dialogues.

- Q: How long has it taken for your collaboration to develop to the point where you work well together?
  - A (Troy): Four years or so. We have done great things, but had to iron out miscommunications and misinterpretations.
  - Comment: The time needed to work with Tribes can be shorter depending on your approach and the kind of person you are. We have done some intensive trainings for new people we hired, where they absorbed a great deal over a year by not asking questions but rather listening, and then being able to understand health care in relation to care for the land, ocean, watersheds, and trees – if our environment is well and healthy, we in turn maintain our health and put it back out through prayers. We will explain what is precious and what is sacred, and may not let you get very close, but will meet you halfway with an open hand. Outside people have very restricted views of topics, but Tribal people view things holistically, and when we talk we have to tell the whole story.
  - Reply (Troy): I attended a lot of lunches, these were great opportunities to spend time together.
- Labecca noted that the Yurok Tribe created her position four years ago. She explained: I would go to Operational Area meetings and people’s eyes would roll. We still have years of work to go. But today people are recognizing how far the Yurok Tribe has come in terms of preparing themselves. The need for this was starkly clearly after the 2005-6 floods – that’s how it has to happen, the Operational Areas are not going to come and help. The Tribe reaches out to work with all these agencies, but has to do its own internal planning and education and preparation.
  - Comment: This happens so often. A liaison is created, we spend time educating them, teach them as much as we can and break some of their bad habits, and then they’re transferred, with a new person coming in who wants to change everything. This happens at the field-level and also the supervisory-level. Agencies need to build relationships with Indians if they want to have a clue, and must buy into the importance of including Tribes in their decision-making. It has to be more than one person. It has to be institutional buy-in, and a change in the institutional way of thinking. Our issues continue to evolve, the only difference being that people aren’t taking herring away now, they are taking away culture and sacred places and our ability to be independent nations. So institutions and counties have to but into these things – these are important to all of you, we walk on two legs the same way you do, feel the same way. But our feelings are rooted to that one place. We did not come here from some other place, did not come to the land of the free and home of brave new opportunity. This was here already for us. The people here are deeply rooted to the ground that you want to protect, so let us help you, do not

shut the door on us. We can save you millions, or we can cost you millions. I appreciate the work everyone has done at these things, there are brand new thoughts and ideas, and others should learn from your work and the different way you are thinking.

- Reply (Troy): I plan to stay around, I have spent 11 years in that office so far and hope to retire there.
- Reply (Labecca): I really appreciate this forum. There was an opportunity to provide background and grassroots information, rather than just being spoken to and being told, “This is all rosy and here is how you do it.”

## **(7) Attendance**

1. **Ira Artz**, TetraTech
2. **Sara Agahi**, County of San Diego
3. **Aaron Bryant**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
4. **Jack Eldridge**, M. Baker Corporation
5. **Dorian Fougères**, Center for Collaborative Policy, CSUS
6. **Mark Franco**, Winnemem Wintu Tribe
7. **Brian Green**, Ogilvy Public Relations
8. **Darryl Hatheway**, AECOM Water
9. **Bill Hom**, California Department of Water Resources
10. **Angela Kucherenko**, Federal Emergency Management Agency
11. **Ray Lenaburg**, Federal Emergency Management Agency
12. **Ray Lee**, California Department of Water Resources
13. **Valentin Lopez**, Chairman, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
14. **Chris McCready**, California Department of Water Resources
15. **Labecca Nessier**, Yurok Tribe
16. **Troy Niccolini**, National Weather Service
17. **Michael Nowlan**, Wood Rogers
18. **Ricardo Pineda**, California Department of Water Resources
19. **Veronica Rodriguez**, Ogilvy Public Relations
20. **Jane Rowan**, The Bioengineering Group
21. **Michael St. Agustin**, Federal Emergency Management Agency
22. **Kathleen Schaefer**, Federal Emergency Management Agency
23. **Atta Stevenson**
24. **Iovanka Todt**, Floodplain Management Association
25. **Randy Yonemura**
26. **Sterling Young**, Natural Resources Conservation Service – Hawaii