

5. Tribal Needs Assessment Summary



Photo: Karl Nielsen

Introduction

California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) was created in 2006 at the request of impacted California Tribal leadership and Tribal members to address the toxic legacy of mercury left over from the California Gold Rush. Their mission is to “protect and restore California Indian Peoples’ cultural traditions, ancestral territories, means of subsistence, and environmental health.” Since 2003, CIEA has worked in partnership with Tribes in Northern California, over ninety (90) Tribes today, to increase Tribal participation within the decision-making bodies that affect water quality and to identify strategies to address environmental destruction and resulting toxins that keep families from fishing cultures wherein fish play an important cultural, spiritual, and nutritional role.

CIEA’s programs are Mercury Tribal Health, Tribal Self-Advocacy, and Leadership Programs. They provide health education to healthcare providers and community members on ways to avoid mercury and PCBs in fish. CIEA piloted the first Women Infant and Children’s (WIC) curriculum, providing nutritional information on wild-caught and store-bought fish. The Self-Advocacy program provides tools for Tribal leadership to advocate on their own behalf with the goal that Indian Nations are at the table whenever decisions are being made that affect traditional Tribal lands, resources, and Tribal members. One of CIEA’s guiding principles is that Indigenous Peoples have a right to eat traditional foods and set environmental cleanup standards for their cultural continuance.

CIEA staff continues to provide training to American Indian Health clinics, health care providers (for Continuing Medical Education or CME) and directly to the public. CIEA has successfully worked with California Tribes, the Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to develop materials and clear messaging. Over time, their advocacy work and resulting leadership of partnering Tribes has become stronger and their goals have shifted to creating a future where fish are available at subsistence levels throughout the state. CIEA now provides technical support to this end. Today, CIEA is the Tribal Engagement Coordinator for the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP), wherein they coordinate Tribal Representative Elections, water strategy workgroups, and advisory committees, and provide Technical Assistance. In the San Francisco Bay IRWM Region, CIEA coordinates gathering Tribal Advisory Committees, Technical Assistance, and is coordinating and implementing changes to the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM Coordinating Committee governance structure to include Tribes. CIEA has partnered with Tribes to conduct needs assessments within four key IRWM regions; in the Sierra/Sacramento River, Mountain Counties, the North Coast, the San Francisco Bay, and Bay Delta. They are also spearheading a campaign to create new tools for Indigenous Peoples to require cleaner water quality standards under the Clean Water Act.

CIEA supports Northern California Tribes in applying new Tribal beneficial use definitions to develop safer water quality objectives for the Basin Plan Amendments to the Central Valley, San Francisco Bay, and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Water Boards). CIEA will support Tribal engagement for Northern California Tribal efforts to regionally designate traditionally used water bodies under the “new” statewide beneficial use definitions, “Tribal Subsistence Fishing” and “Tribal Cultural Uses.” These new definitions are now legally defensible under the Clean Water Act (CWA). In addition to meaningful Tribal inclusion, long-term benefits include increased protections for water quality. Integration of the two new Beneficial Uses has been determined as a priority by each Regional Water Board for all four plans. CIEA is currently working to engage 81 San Francisco, Central, and Northern California Tribes to support Tribal engagement and participation in the update process. For Tribal subsistence, CIEA will provide training on how to complete fish consumption and cultural use surveys; build consensus on final recommendations to each Regional Water Quality Control Board; organize and coordinate two planning meetings per basin plan, and provide travel support for Tribal cultural practitioners and staff to attend Regional Water Board meetings and hearings (32 participants to attend Regional Water Board hearings). Tribes will determine which water bodies in their regions need these definitions applied, and the associated water quality objectives. CIEA will then assist Tribes in coordinating testimonies and identifying criteria to support the need for cultural beneficial uses on specific water bodies during different times of the year.



The ancestral lands of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, now part of Pinnacles National Park.

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon

Integrated Regional Water Management

AB-52 Tribal Consultation requires Tribes to request in writing notification of proposed projects in Tribal footprint areas where proposed projects may have a significant impact. CIEA works with Tribes who are working to increase state agency outreach and consultation to reach Tribes in the source water and receiving water areas. CIEA maintains that consultation should be conducted with Tribes when their cultural resources will be affected by a project. Water is a cultural resource and by consulting only with those in the footprint area the state is not meeting its responsibility of prior and informed consultation.

The Delta Conveyance Project proposes new intake facilities which will remove a total of 6,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) from Northern California to be transferred to Southern California. This limits the possibilities for how surface and groundwater can be enhanced by restoration and enhancement of natural systems, and impacts the footprint and surrounding environment and habitat negatively, making it unsustainable and detrimental to the environment. This plan largely focuses on how much water can be stored and diverted instead of focusing on how upland meadows, slowly meandering streams and rivers supported by wide riparian zones, and wetlands could greatly enhance groundwater sequestration and slowing surface water flow, which would provide water in wildlands for fire protection and cooling water for fish habitat. CIEA is in discussion with California Tribes to put an end to this project and present environmentally friendly and sustainable alternatives spearheaded by Tribes. CIEA and Tribes are in conversations with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to convince them of the negative impacts of this particular project. They are hopeful that DWR will recognize and listen to the expertise of Tribes who have been stewarding the land since time immemorial. The Delta Conveyance Project is similar to other projects proposed in the past by governors of California only with a different name. CIEA is advocating for DWR to work more closely with Tribes to create a more sustainable plan for California that has less of a detrimental impact on both the environment and the Native American people of California.

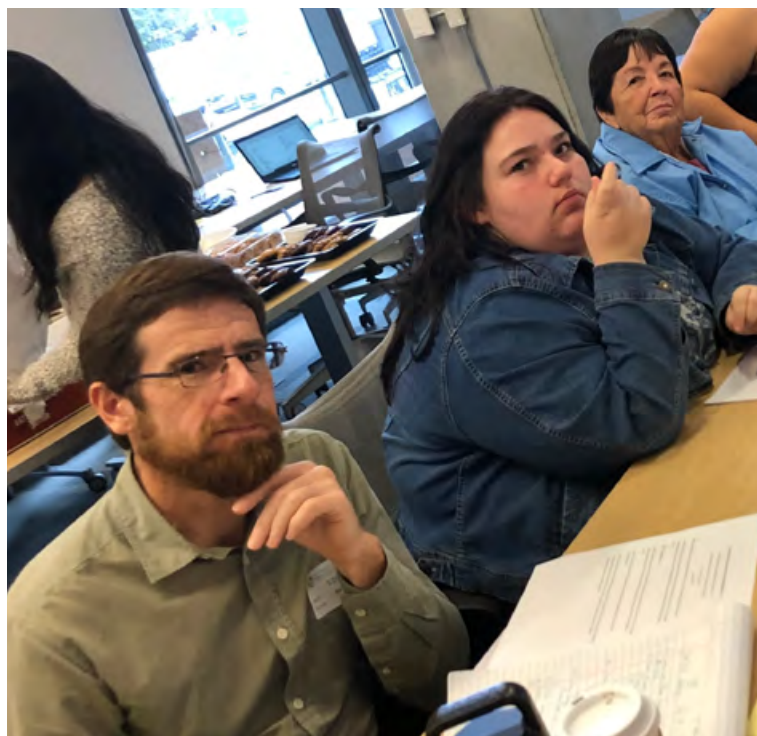
Introduction and Methodology

The San Francisco Bay is home to many Tribes. During CIEA's initial outreach, they reached out to all Tribes with ties to historical use and subsequent management responsibilities in the Bay Area including Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Lytton Band of Pomo Indians, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria, and Mishewal Wappo of Alexander Valley. Some of these Tribes expressed interest in participating but due to capacity issues were not able to join at this time. Others wanted to provide other Tribes within the San Francisco Bay Area the opportunity to expand and grow their capacity, but asked to be kept informed as the work continues.

The survey was developed through consensus at a Tribal Advisory Committee meeting with five Tribal partners in September 2019, including:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band/ Amah Mutsun Land Trust
- Association of Ramaytush Ohlone
- Him-r^n Ohlone, Jalquin, Saclan Tribe, Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok
- Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC) / Sogorea Te' Land Trust
- Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area

This process was used to build trust amongst these Tribal partners and build a stronger relationship between CIEA and the Tribal partners. CIEA continued to meet with Tribal partners throughout this process to continually engage them, and added a new Tribal partner, Napa Suscol Intertribal Council in 2020. While Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC) / Sogorea Te' Land Trust helped to create the survey, in late 2019 they chose to focus their efforts internally and not complete the needs assessment process.



Pictured from left to right:

Adam French of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Brenda Morris and Ruth Orta of the Him-r^n Tribe at the Tribal Needs Assessment presentation to the Department of Water Resources on February 14, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon

CIEA's five Tribal partners of the San Francisco Bay Area who completed the needs assessment surveys were:

- Amah Mutsun Tribal Band/ Amah Mutsun Land Trust
- Association of Ramaytush Ohlone
- Him-r^n Ohlone, Jalquin, Saclan Tribe, Bay Miwok, Plains Miwok
- Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area
- Napa Suscol Intertribal Council

It is worth recognizing the significant difference in the membership of each Tribe and the resulting wide range in the number of responses from individual Tribes. For example, two of the four participating Tribal partners have fewer than 50 members, while the other two have a membership base of over 500. This is not due to lack of representation in the San Francisco Bay Area but due to active members.

CIEA staff provided the survey from April 24, 2019 through December 1, 2020 using an online digital service, fillable PDF, and paper surveys to Tribal environmental directors, Tribal administration, leadership staff, Tribal elders and members at large. The Tribes of San Francisco Bay Area agreed upon this style of surveying to better encompass an aggregate result of their Tribal communities. Each Tribe who completed this survey has traditional territory within the San Francisco Bay Area. Three of the five Tribal partners have territories that overlap with IRWM regions in funding areas adjacent to the San Francisco Bay Area region.

The needs assessment process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CIEA and their Tribal partners had planned major events to gather survey responses and to hold face-to-face discussions about regional Tribal needs, initially to be held in Spring and Summer 2020. For two of these events, two of the Tribal partners expected to have about 200 participants combined at their events. Due to state shelter-in-place directives and because of the risk of endangering Tribal elders and other participants, they postponed these events for a later date. At the time that this report is being published there are still concerns over COVID-19, and these events remain on hold.

In order to continue the needs assessment process during the COVID-19 pandemic, CIEA moved efforts to an online format that yielded 56 additional results across the four Tribal partners. The fact that this online process did not allow Tribal Chairs and Council members to introduce and endorse the survey in-person likely undermined Tribal community engagement and reduced overall response rates. CIEA and the San Francisco Estuary Partnership agreed, therefore, that this report is an initial submission. CIEA continues to conduct follow-up interviews with Tribal partners individually to review their results and to receive additional and/or clarifying information. As part of the DACTI Program, these follow-up conversations are intended to provide additional information about what support is needed by Tribes and Tribal members in the region.

These Tribal Needs Assessment results and the information in the attached appendices are provided in aggregate to protect sensitive information and maintain the anonymity of the Tribes that responded. This enabled Tribes to share transparent and honest answers without the concern that there will be direct or indirect negative outcomes.

San Francisco Bay Area IRWM Tribal Needs Assessment

Executive Summary

The majority of the findings presented in this Executive Summary and the full final Needs Assessment Report stem from the Tribal Needs Assessment Survey, which consisted of a combination of closed-ended, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions organized in specific sections focused on Tribal background, demographic information of survey respondents, water access and water quality, environmental issues and watershed-level concerns (e.g. stormwater and flooding, climate change, sea level rise, sources of contamination), fire preparedness and emergency response, other challenges in Tribal communities, and awareness of and participation in IRWM processes.

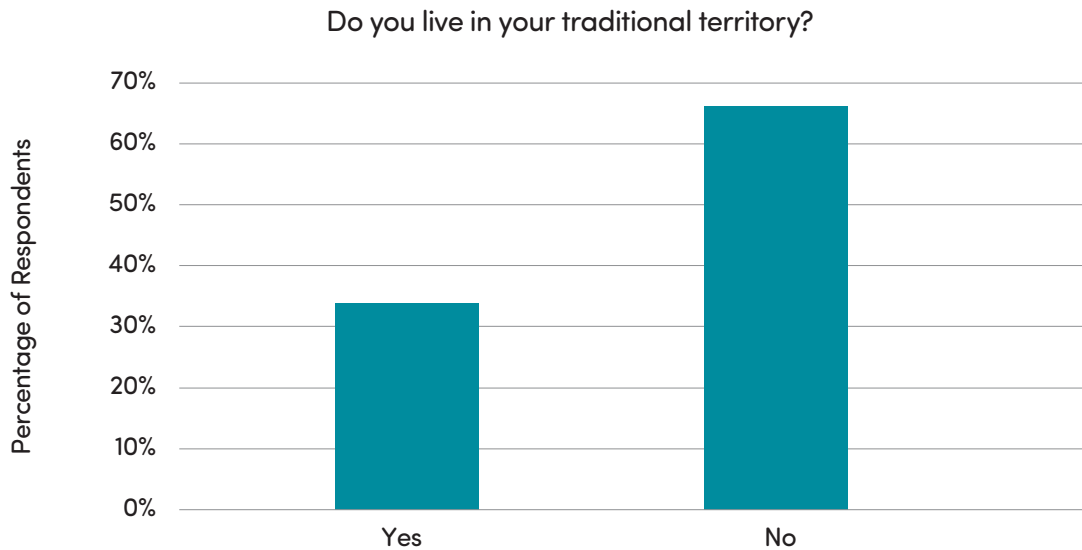
In total, 56 members from the four Tribes participated in the survey. Respondents included Tribal elders, leaders, and general members representing a diversity of age groups and geographic locations. Just over half of these respondents (52%) reported living in urban areas, while 34% resided in suburban areas, and 13% lived in rural areas. It is notable that only 31% of respondents reported living within their Tribe's ancestral territory. This finding underscores the high levels of displacement of Tribal members from their traditional territories throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and adjoining regions, due both to historical colonization processes as well as ongoing socioeconomic challenges such as the region's high cost of living and widespread gentrification. This displacement has not, however, severed the Tribes' connections to these territories nor has it removed the responsibility of Bay Area Tribal members to steward and provide balance to the lands nor, negated the need for access to traditional foods, medicines, and water for subsistence and cultural uses within the region. The fact that a significant number of Tribal respondents reside outside the San Francisco Bay Area region as a result of this displacement means that a portion of the findings reported here correspond to water systems and environmental conditions in geographic locations outside the Bay Area. Additionally, the ancestral territories of some Tribal communities extend beyond the boundaries of the San Francisco Bay Area IRWM region, heightening their responsibilities and costs related to participation and inclusion in IRWM-related resource management activities within multiple IRWM regions.



Ruth Orta, Chairwoman of the Him-r^n Tribe, speaking at Alcatraz about her family history and Tribal heritage.

Photo courtesy of Him-r^n Ohlone

As this graph shows, out of all Tribal respondents, only 31% live on their traditional Tribal lands.



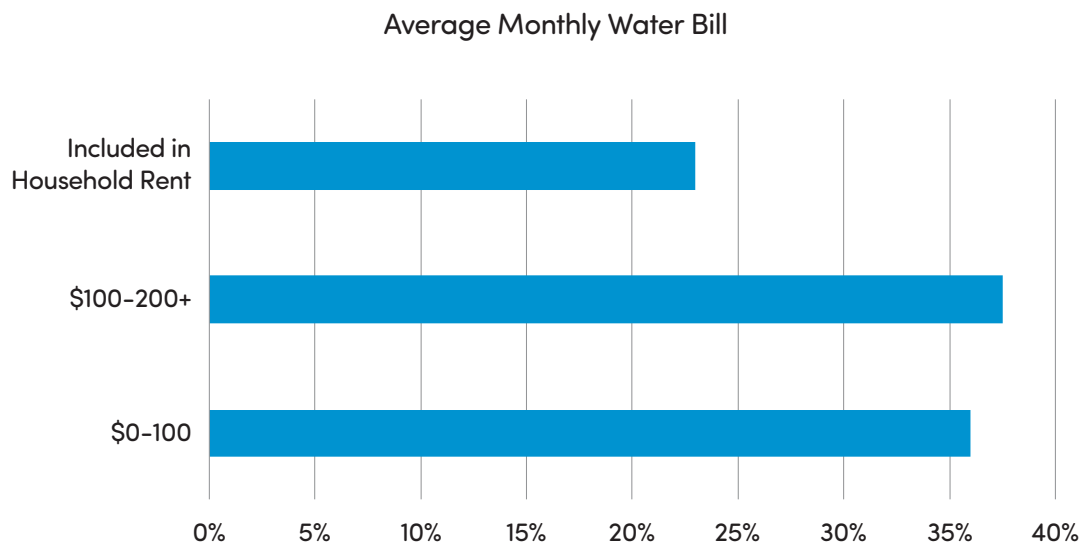
Drinking Water



Green Space

Water Access and Affordability

With regards to water access and affordability, 36% of survey respondents reported a monthly average water bill of \$0-100, while 37.5% reported a monthly cost of \$100-200+, and 23% reported that their monthly water costs were included in their household rent. Broadly, 23% of those surveyed stated that they had experienced difficulty paying for monthly access to water, a concerning finding that requires follow-up investigation. Additionally, 43% of respondents stated that they purchased bottled drinking water, with 72% of this group paying between \$0-50 per month and 14% paying between \$50-100+ monthly for drinking water. Of those purchasing drinking water, 32% reported experiencing difficulty with this expense, a detail that also requires additional investigation and in particular the need to identify solutions for these Tribal members.





Drinking Water Quality

When asked about drinking water quality, 18% of survey respondents rated their water quality as poor, 41% considered their water to be of fair or tolerable quality, 23% rated their water as good quality, and 17% considered their water to be of excellent quality. Respondents were largely unaware of the last time their water had been tested to be compared with safe quality standards, and a large majority (71%) expressed an interest in having their household water supplies tested for quality. In addition to the 43% of respondents who reported purchasing bottled drinking water, 36% reported drinking filtered tap water. Together, these findings highlight a widespread avoidance, and potential mistrust, of direct consumption of tap water, a condition that can contribute to significant additional household expense and environmental impacts caused through the purchase of bottled water. As the Needs Assessment process with other communities in the San Francisco Bay Area region and elsewhere has shown, public mistrust of tap water quality is widespread and requires additional investigation and follow-up in many contexts, including with Tribal households.



Environmental Issues and Watershed-Level Impacts

Tribal respondents expressed a wide variety of concerns around environmental issues and watershed-level impacts, many of which were linked to specific geographic locations. Site-specific issues included concerns over pollution of waterways by various sources and contaminants (e.g. chemicals from agricultural and industrial processes, sewage, trash and illegal dumping, homeless encampments, etc.); flooding of homes, roads, and other infrastructure; and erosion. Some of the broader environmental issues mentioned by respondents included climate change impacts such as higher temperatures, growing wildfire risks, sea level rise and saltwater intrusion, drought, declining and over-drafted water supplies, air pollution, declining native plant diversity, and problems with invasive species, pests and disease vectors like mosquitoes. In addition to concerns over these environmental impacts, a number of respondents mentioned impacts to cultural practices and resources or Tribal beneficial uses of natural resources. These include concerns over reduced access to ancestral waterways and landscapes for traditional ceremonies, subsistence and resource gathering, and direct impacts to important cultural sites (including burial sites). Follow-up activities are needed to understand and discuss strategies to address these concerns for both environmental and cultural impacts.

Emergency Response and Fire Preparedness

When asked about emergency response plans and fire preparedness, a majority of survey respondents (64%) reported having no emergency response plan, and 50% of respondents stated that they would appreciate assistance in developing such a plan. When asked if their Tribe or Tribal community needed fire preparedness assistance, 27% of respondents answered “yes,” 8% of respondents replied “no,” and 52% of respondents answered “I do not know.” Similarly, when asked if they would be interested in receiving funding for fire preparedness, 27% of those surveyed said “yes,” 21% said “no,” and 34% responded “I do not know.” These responses coupled with the increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires in the San Francisco Bay Area and California in general, suggest a need for follow-up related to emergency response generally and fire preparedness in particular. There is an opportunity for municipalities to communicate with residents and with Tribal staff and leadership in their regions about any existing emergency response plans.



The ancestral lands of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, now part of Pinnacles National Park.

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon

Specific Challenges

When queried about specific challenges within their Tribal communities, respondents nearly unanimously (96%) pointed to the high cost of living as a challenge to housing within their traditional territories. When asked about factors limiting access to Tribal culture in their communities, many respondents highlighted issues related to separation from and lack of access to ancestral lands, and associated resources such as traditional foods, including aquatic fish and shellfish, native plants, and medicines. Other issues mentioned by multiple respondents included a lack of educational opportunities and knowledge resources in addition to the ongoing intergenerational trauma linked to colonization and settler colonialism. When asked about other issues impacting their Tribal communities, respondents pointed to problems such as limited job opportunities, poverty, lack of federal Tribal recognition, and limited activities for children towards cultural continuance. When asked about ways to address or overcome these diverse challenges, respondents offered an array of ideas including suggestions for returning land to Tribal communities, creating access opportunities within ancestral territories, improving educational and recreational opportunities, supporting cultural revitalization including activities for youth and emerging leadership, and providing more affordable housing.

Familiarity with IRWM

Only a small percentage (11%) of surveyed respondents expressed familiarity with the IRWM process in the San Francisco Bay Area, likely reflecting those Tribal members who are participating in the Tribal Advisory Committee or facilitating the Needs Assessment and related IRWM activities under the Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Involvement (DACI/DACTI) Program.

Highlighted Needs Assessment Questions and Responses

Tribal participation in the IRWM Program is challenging for a number of reasons related to IRWM boundaries. Simply stated, this is because the traditional territory of a Tribe often does not align with IRWM boundaries. Half of the responding Tribes indicated that their ancestral homelands and areas of Tribal responsibility are in more than one IRWM region either because of their current physical location, or because IRWM regional boundaries cut across their Tribal traditional aboriginal territories. For some Tribal members, displacement from ancestral territory means they currently reside in regions outside of those territories where they have cultural responsibility for stewardship, and where they want to focus engagement in IRWM efforts.

Only 34% of respondents stated they lived on their traditional territories, which highlights the disparities between being able to live on their traditional territories and being forced out due external factors such as gentrification, cost of living, and other issues resulting from colonization and settler colonialism. This pressure was also a reason CIEA and Tribal partners scheduled out-of-area events to gather survey results: there is an increased cost of hosting meetings within the Bay Area, and there was a need to accommodate Tribal members who do not live in their traditional territories.



Flooding



Trash and Litter



Industrial Contamination

The highest rates of concern (32%) were associated with pollution of creeks from chemicals or trash. A few respondents said that homeless populations living near creeks were a concern. One respondent specifically cited that “Silver Creek in San Jose had issues.” Another respondent stated that there were issues in the locations of “Plata Arroyo Park, Hayward regional Shoreline area, and Alameda Creek.” One respondent said they were “concerned about the quality of creek runoff into the ocean.” For those responding about out-of-area pollution concerns, respondents cited “urban runoff in downtown Long Beach, and the Sulfur Bank mine adjacent to Clearlake.”

Water quality problems from soil or animal waste was an issue for 20% of respondents, and of these responses again “Plata Arroyo Park in San Jose” was indicated as a problem area. Another respondent said, “Alameda Creek had issues.” Out of region concerns were related specifically to the “cattle farm pollution in Hanford, California.”

Flooding was a concern among 23% of respondents. One respondent said that they live three houses down from the creek and that they have worries about flooding. Another said they were worried about flooding at Plata Arroyo Park in San Jose. For those respondents that stated that flooding was a concern, CIEA has initiated follow-up to receive specific information. These areas could be identified for future IRWM implementation projects. The question of flooding yielded additional information wherein 20% of respondents stated that road flooding was their concern. There was a higher number than expected for house flooding specifically: 12.5% of respondents indicated this was their concern. One respondent said they live on the Hayward fault and there was concern about flooding because of earthquakes. One of the responses related to house flooding didn’t list a specific concern and as a result, additional details have been requested.

Park flooding was a concern for 11% of respondents and two respondents listed Plata Arroyo Park as a flooding issue. Another respondent said yes, that park flooding was a concern and follow-up will be needed to ask them to specify their specific concern and the location.

Sewage from manholes was a concern for 12.5% of respondents. In this questionnaire section, Plata Arroyo Park in San Jose and Cameron Street in Hanford were listed as problematic for manholes and sewage. In relation to garbage, one response noted that household waste is a huge problem. Another respondent said Big Silver Creek in San Jose near Muwékma Ohlone territory was an area of concern.

Erosion from flooding was a concern for 16% of respondents. One respondent listed Plata Arroyo Park in San Jose as a concern, and another said that erosion from flooding is a concern. Follow-up is being conducted to identify specific needs to address erosion control.



Pescadero Beach on Amah Mutsun Tribal Band traditional territory.

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon



Sea Level Rise and Salinity Intrusion

The first question in this section asked respondents about the impact of sea level rise and sea water intrusion on the respondents' Tribe or their Tribal community. Responses included loss of ancestral lands and cultural resources that will be under water, a worry about an increase in territoriality and fighting, and that there would be further restrictions for Tribes to access resources and cultural sites. The core concern was related to flooding and loss of land, that "sea level rise and sea water intrusion would be bad because our lands are on the coast," including concern for some that they are "already under sea level" and further erosion or events would inundate them. This is worth noting in regional climate adaptive strategies especially where human rights and environmental justice are concerned. For Tribes, especially those in coastal communities, the loss of traditional territories and resources must be elevated because Tribes cannot practice their place-based cultures or steward their territories in another place. Loss of traditional territory is irreplaceable. Another respondent worried "that it will change the shape/function of the coast." There is widespread concern that sea level rise will result in ocean inundation of cultural sites and a revealing of burial sites and remains. Protection of these places should be included in collaboration with regional Tribes in any plan to address climate change. This must be done in a way that protects the anonymity of the site so as not to alert those intending to desecrate Native cultural sites.

Because there is a cultural and nutritional need to maintain traditional food sources for Coastal Tribes, animals, birds, and other species that rely on intertidal and ocean foods sources, there is a general concern that more needs to be done to save the environment.

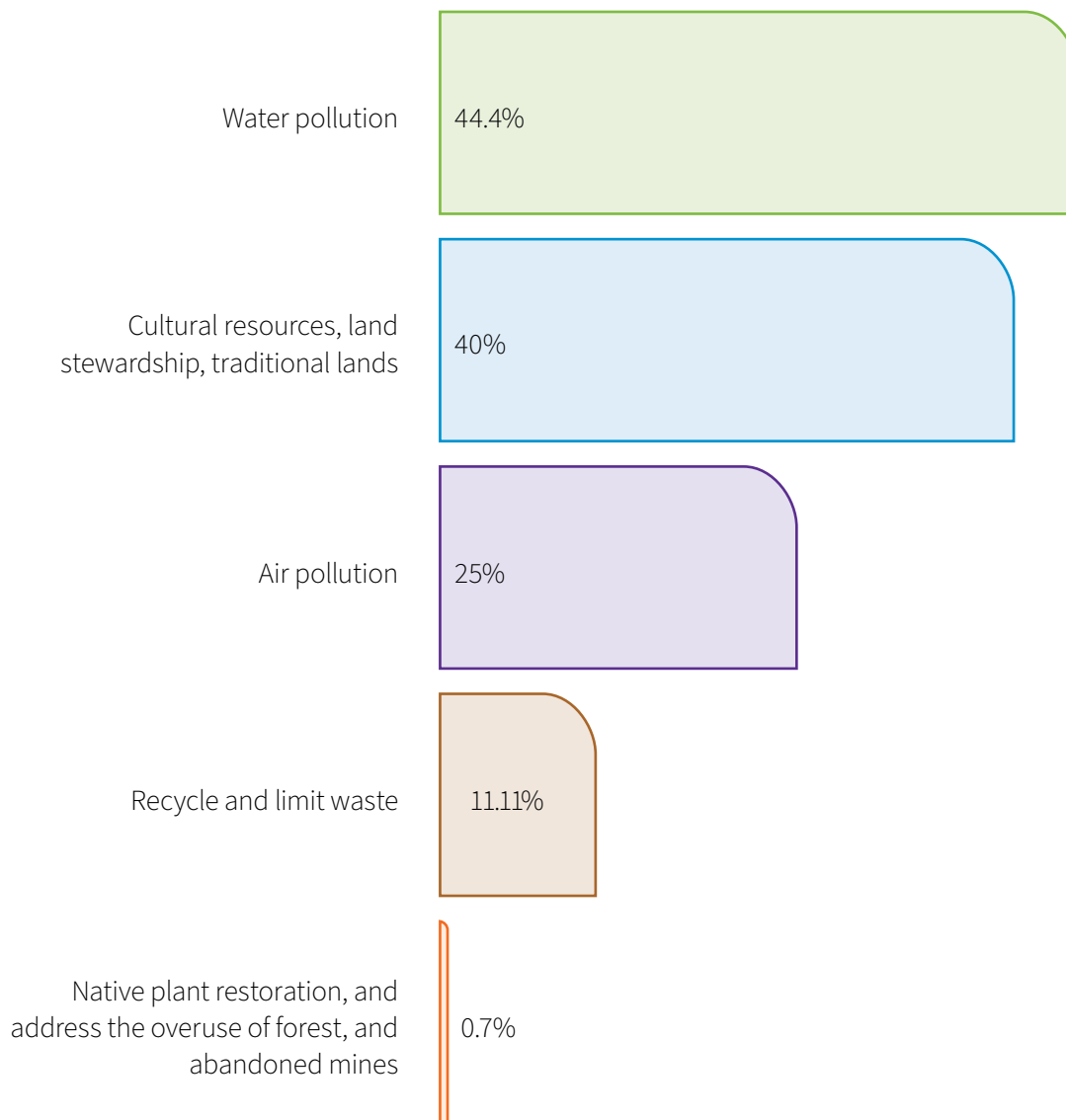
Tribes are worried for the general population in addition to their own members, that sea level rise will threaten Central coast agriculture and food supplies.

Respondents stated their Tribe is not prepared for sea level rise and increased environmental catastrophes, and that they need more research, review of modeling, and assessment of options for mitigation so they can make regional recommendations and engage in activities to protect resources and culturally sensitive areas.

One of the respondents had written a piece on the potential “partial law of symmetries” along the coast, which may be related to the need to review international law and sea level rise as well as enter into policy and water-related work.

Overall Priorities of Tribes

The following were the top environmental priorities identified by Tribal participants:





Lands owned by Suscol Intertribal Council in Napa are managed to promote ecosystem health, including wild mushrooms, some of which are then harvested as a culturally important food.

Photo: Alex Tavizon

The following were the priorities that Tribes identified:

- Resilience to sea level rise
- Need for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Land management/restoration for water quality
- Restoration of cultural and fire practices
- Responses to catastrophic wildfires like those in California and Australia
- Connecting knowledge systems for environmental stewardship, e.g., connecting helpful parts of western science with Indigenous knowledge is a top priority
- Erosion, sea level rise, and temperature rise
- Removing invasive plants to grow our Native plants
- Need clean water to grow Native plants
- Health effects, affordable drinking water, and food farmed. Reduction of pollution and clean water
- Cleaning up waterways and creeks
- Cultural resources, stewardship, traditional ecological knowledge sharing
- Water quality and communal wellness aligned with environmentalism is a top priority

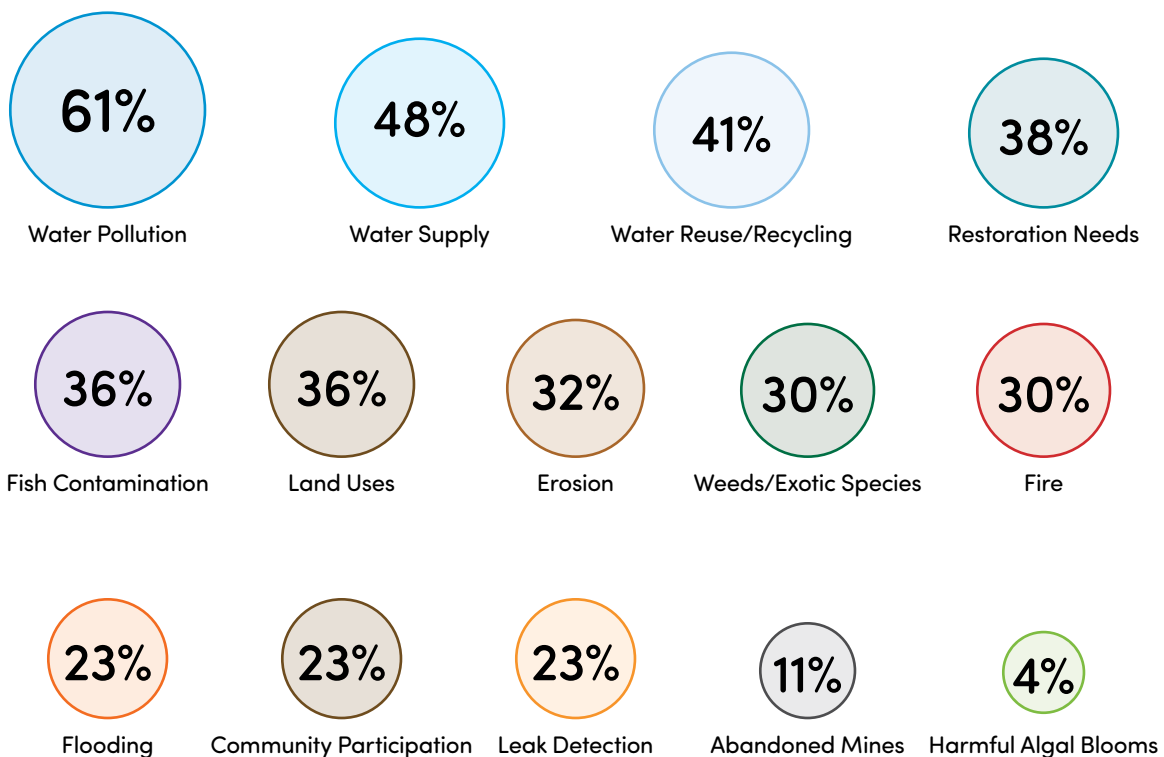


Revegetated riparian corridor on Amah Mutsun Tribal Band traditional territory.

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon

Primary Issues Affecting the Watershed(s)

Respondents were asked about the primary issues affecting their watershed(s), and what topics they would like to be covered in a workshop on watershed assessment and management. Respondents were provided with a list to choose from and at the end had the availability to be open-ended. The following are the responses identifying the primary issue by highest percentage; these percentages closely follow the priority topics identified by respondents for a watershed assessment and management workshop:



CIEA is conducting follow-up with these respondents to gain additional information to confirm that planned trainings are tailored for these needs, and then to schedule trainings as part of the DACTI Program. For example, ‘leak detection’ could refer to different needs for pipes, storage tanks, etc.; ‘fire’ could refer to how to manage forests to reduce chances of large catastrophic fires using controlled burning or the need for water storage tanks or fire hydrants; and for many issue areas there may be a need for trainings on how to identify regional point sources of toxins. There are some trainings like those for fish contamination that CIEA can provide online given COVID-19. They already have trainings prepared using PowerPoint presentations developed for Tribal families, California Native American health centers, and Bay Area Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinics on how to continue to eat traditional fish while avoiding or reducing toxins. There were additional training and workshop needs captured in the notes sections after each question. Of these most were listed above, with the exception of a request for funding, and the need for environmental cleanup information and trainings.

Climate Change

One respondent wrote “many Tribal members live in the Central Valley where living conditions could get worse with pollution heat and aridity.” Similarly, drought was a concern for another. Respondents were concerned that the “cultural resources in the ocean may be impacted by climate change and the opportunity to revitalize Tribal culture will be affected.” Another who taught earth science stated “that with improved air quality they could focus on how to adapt with extreme cold winters and hot summers. There is concern for regional wetlands and native plant diversity.” One respondent wrote that “there is so much fire fuel over the lands, which would be addressed in part by Tribal traditional burns.” There is concern that cattle ranching ruins the land and is a cause of climate change, whereas traditional cultural practices and Indigenous stewardship protect against climate change. Concerns were also expressed that there will be less access to waterways for traditional ceremonies and gatherings, and less access to fresh water. One respondent said, “we need to be educated about climate change.” Another respondent stated, “rising water tides.” One respondent wrote, “climate changes have led to abundant fires and drought locally.” According to another respondent, “traditionally stewarded territories are drastically changing, ecological systems are shifting, and our traditional homelands are in danger due to settler impacts and a lack of Indigenous stewardship.” There is concern that Santa Cruz, in particular, is very vulnerable to climate change due to sea level rise, flooding, drought, and fire.



The first ceremonial arbor in the Bay Area, constructed on property owned by Suscol Intertribal Council, is used as a place for gatherings, ceremonies, and rituals of numerous Native American Tribes throughout the United States.

Photo: Alex Tavizon

Tribal respondents identified the following ways to address these environmental concerns. Answers to this open-ended question included:

- Let Tribes monitor [and steward] the land
- Renewable energy, near the Monterey Bay windy area but with careful consideration since some strategies may kill birds and/or animals
- Solar energy
- Utilize watershed[s] for traditional foods, fresh water and as a great environmental benefit to Tribe
- Fuel reduction
- Land restoration
- Environmental work
- Restrictions on land use and water uses
- Textile recycling
- Return land to Tribes, return to what they had before as restoration goals
- Petition and rally to possibly create and change policy of water
- Land stewardship programs, training of communities on healthy practices
- Changes to system, including anarchy and/or use of collaborative management model

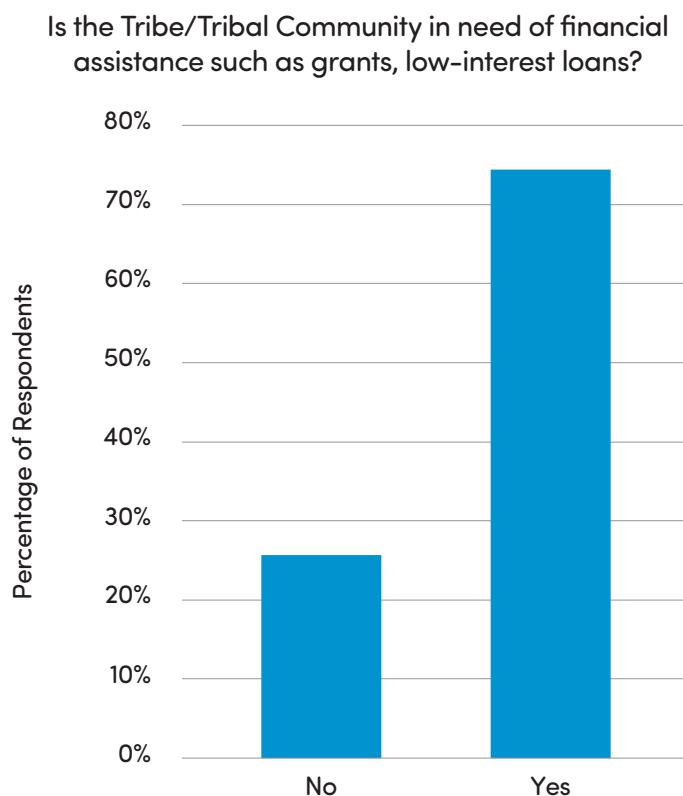
Follow-Up to Needs Assessment Findings

The following are planned activities based on some of the priority identified needs:

Tribes did indicate they are interested in geospatial technology and mapping, but did not give details on the level of training needed. There are a variety of skill sets among users: some are able to use GPS technology to gather data and generate maps documenting historical features; others conduct data entry. The goal is to attend free online training courses offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Geospatial Division Branch, or if needed hire San Francisco Estuary Institute or other trainer(s) for follow-up classes.

Tribes indicated a need for grant writing or administrative support, stating that there is a lack of staff time available to complete proposals. Other comments identified a need for funding to support Tribal planning and to support the development of successful grant applications. One participant stated, “grant writing is not the issue, it is finding grants.” This respondent requested a grant resource list. Other participants expressed a need for specific trainings and support for IRWM proposal development.

Additional Tribal comments were related to a need for training to support water quality sampling to address compliance concerns.



This graph represents the need Tribes have about financial assistance support and capacity-building. 74% of respondents identified this as a concern.



Ceremonial white sage and herbal smudging stick made by Deja Gould and Johnella LaRose of Sogorea Te' Land Trust/Indian People Organizing for Change (IPOC).

Photo courtesy of Alex Tavizon

Process of Surveying and Follow-up with Tribes

In the initial meeting the following question was asked, “Why complete another survey that may not result in issues being addressed?”

This question is not surprising given the experience of many Tribes and Tribal members, who feel they are superficially studied repeatedly, with little benefit from the outcomes of those studies.

During the first DACTI Program orientation meeting held in October 2018, Tribes expressed concern about the lack of available funding to support meaningful participation in the program, as well as a lack of funding for technical assistance. Tribes requested that funding be set aside specifically for them to participate. This is being provided through the DACTI Program through CIEA. With the funding secured, CIEA convened participating Tribal partners of the Bay Area in a Tribal Advisory Committee, which provides a space for inter-Tribal dialogue and review and approval of project processes and outcomes. The Needs Assessment was the first step to identifying what should be offered and be asked among each of the Tribes.

For the presentation, CIEA was advised to use qualifying statements, to minimize the promise of assistance that might not be available. Tribal participants expressed general discouragement at use of the word “may” as included in the outreach presentation (Needs Assessment May Result in Potential Technical Assistance & Capacity Building). This created challenges and prompted extensive explanations, as Tribes requested a description and detailed information as to the nature of benefits that could be received if they participated in the DACTI or related IRWM programs.

It is important to know what is available and to ensure that Tribes themselves guide how funds will be spent so that the program best meets the needs of Bay Area Tribes.

In follow-up interviews and meetings, participating Tribes identified CIEA as the organization they preferred to conduct initial follow-up questions after completion of the Needs Assessment. Tribes indicated that once the needs assessments and follow-up interviews are completed, a contractor, state agency, or the Tribe themselves with their own staff capacity would provide technical assistance for the Tribal organizations and Tribes. After Tribes choose who they trust and hire, the technical assistance provider will work hand in hand with them to do onsite evaluations and recommendations for workplan activities to develop a potential project.

When Tribes were asked to advise on future outcomes of the needs assessment, future services, and the DACTI Program, participants suggested that convening of Tribes throughout the region would be most beneficial. There was consensus that a formal group discussion would ensure that the assessment is not misinterpreted and would allow Tribes to collectively decide what could be provided to them throughout the life of the program. The Tribes were in consensus that they are best positioned to interpret the results of their Tribal Needs Assessment for their people and to collectively identify solutions that will work best for their individual Tribe. To ensure this opportunity, the Tribal Needs Assessment report will be provided to participating San Francisco Bay Area Tribes for review and next steps development.



Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Chairman Val Lopez with Tribal youth at summer camp outing to Pescadero Beach.

Photo: Alex Tavizon

DACTI Program and Technical Assistance Programs Eligibility

Early on in the planning process, Tribal participants agreed that the DACTI Program should prioritize support and technical assistance to Tribes who are not state or federally recognized, or to small communities ineligible to receive funds as a public water system. This perspective is aligned well with the overall purpose of the DACTI Program as Tribes originally envisioned: to support those in need, and to supplement what state and federal programs cannot fund.

Governance Structure Participation and Inclusion in the IRWM Plan Updates

There are decades-long issues with Tribes being unrepresented in decision-making bodies. Participating Tribes in some IRWMs do not want to fall under a Coordinating Committee IRWM umbrella without Tribal representation in the Coordinating Committee. Providing designated space for Tribal participation in the Coordinating Committee would ensure that there is meaningful representation by Tribal leadership to advocate for their membership when projects are being considered. The best way to move forward is to encourage and include Tribal representatives at the highest levels of decision-making bodies.

There are examples of successful Tribal participation in governance structures that allow for a process to select a Tribal representative and a designated alternate. These were discussed at the March 2020 San Francisco Bay Area Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. Following these conversations, the Coordinating Committee has allocated two to three seats to specifically be shared among the Tribes and Tribal partners of the Bay Area.

Tribal Oversight of the San Francisco Bay Area DAC Program including Tribal Advisory Committee

Tribes have expressed dissatisfaction with the program name “Disadvantaged Communities” (DACs) because it carries a negative connotation and doesn’t reflect the condition of Tribes. Tribes asked for the name to be changed to the Disadvantaged Communities and Tribal Involvement Program, or DACTI Program. Adding the word “Tribes,” best captures the unique political status of Tribes, who are not just stakeholders. Tribal governments have responsibilities to their Tribal citizenship, and state and federal agencies have responsibilities to Tribes as acknowledged in the U.S. Constitution, in multiple legal statutes, and by Executive Orders. At the request of Tribal participants, the DACI Program began to be called the DACTI Program in order to respect the special status of Bay Area Tribes and Tribal participants.

San Francisco Bay Area Tribes continue to express agreement that a funding area-wide Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC), is the best way to guide the Tribal DACTI Program. The TAC serves to both encourage Tribes to participate in the DACTI Program and in their own IRWM regions.

As of June 2019, there were five Tribes in the San Francisco Bay Area interested in joining a funding area-wide San Francisco Bay Area TAC to support this DACTI Program. Starting December 2020, CIEA met with the TAC about seven times. The four Tribal partners, none of whom had been in the same room at once, agreed to collaborate to the benefit of this program. The goals are to ensure that Tribes in the region benefit from the remaining years the program will be in place, including needed technical assistance, workshops and training, developing adequate needs assessments, governance structure guidelines, and any other documents or tools created for the Tribes of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Recognize the DACI, or DACTI, Program as unique and acknowledge its potential for filling service gaps for which many Tribes are unable to find support. Tribes recommend that both federally recognized and federally unrecognized Tribes are supported through the DACTI Program, and that federally unrecognized Tribes be specifically considered for assistance since other federal options are generally not afforded to them.
2. Encourage communication between water providers and the Tribes they service. Provide contact information for regional water providers so that Tribes can reach out to address needs, potentially develop collaborative projects, and find out about quality of the drinking water Tribes are receiving. Obtain and share with Tribes the results of the needs assessments from water purveyors in each IRWM region. Ask water purveyors if they know which Tribes they serve and when was the last time they contacted or met with those Tribes.
3. For water source resilience there is a need for Tribes to secure secondary or alternative sources of water from different water sources or aquifers to ensure continuity of water supply for their territories to maintain cultural practices and subsistence.
4. Identify a bulk storage tank purchase solution because this need is shared by many Tribes in the San Francisco Bay Area region. This need is for both potable and non-potable water sources. In some cases, Tribes need these tanks to be separate so that fire suppression sources are protected.
5. Follow up with Tribes who have documented failing infrastructure, document specific needs, including the scope of upgrades, and identify an appropriate funding source.
6. Ensure access to water/fire hydrants in emergencies, recommend that Tribal staff and/or leadership are trained as regional fire responders with the appropriate fire hydrant wrench(es), access, and link into a network of water tender “tankers” that are stored for use in the local area.



Photo: Ben Botkin

Training Recommendations

1. Hazardous Waste Operation and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) training: coordinate with Tribes to be sure the training contains the elements respondents need. These can be tailored.
2. Program Planning and Management, both IRWM-related and generally: could perhaps invite any who may want to apply to attend Round 1 recipient trainings to see how the process works ahead of time.
3. Geospatial trainings can range from very detailed map creation to how to use existing data/programs. More information needs to be gathered and the courses that were well received should be repeated near those that need this.
4. Grant writing trainings, templates of successful grants both generally and specifically for IRWM proposals, and lists of grants to which Tribes could apply. CIEA, DWR, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), EPA, and State Water Resources Control Board have each been gathering these lists; CIEA proposes combining them and linking these in a web hub. Funding to do this could come from multiple sources and San Francisco Bay Area DACTI program can link to that site.
5. Provide trainings in: water quality sampling, board governance structuring, visualization software, nonprofit background and information training, and obtain tools for monitoring such as plankton and microplastic monitoring.

Recommendations to Increase Tribal Participation in IRWM Programs

1. Dedicate a Tribal Engagement Coordinator or dedicate staff to update Tribal contact lists so that Tribes receive meeting invitations, project solicitations and up-to-date information that enables them to participate in the IRWM Program. In the San Francisco Bay DACTI Tribal Contact List multiple staff and Tribal council persons are included whenever possible including the Tribal Environmental or Natural Resources Director, Tribal Administrator, Member(s) of the Tribal Council, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, or others as identified by the Tribe.
2. CIEA recognizes the cost associated with outreach and Tribal engagement, therefore the San Francisco Bay Coordinating Committee, Roundtable of Regions and the San Francisco Bay Technical Advisory Committee itself should recommend to the state that there be future IRWM funding and that it includes support specifically for Tribal engagement funds.
3. Tribes expressed the importance for the IRWM Coordinating Committee to understand that Tribes have unique political designations as sovereign governments. Federal, state, and local governments have constituencies and responsibilities to protect those interests. Tribes are nations with governing bodies and therefore have similar roles and responsibilities with the added challenge of maintaining cultural continuance of their people.
4. Coordinating Committees should include language in their IRWM Plan and related scoring criteria to incentivize funding projects led by Tribes, and encourage projects that support cultural beneficial uses, access to water, and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. This can be in the scoring criteria for project selection and could be supported by intentionally involving Tribes as project partners.
5. Project proponents should be required to provide a letter of support from the Tribe(s) listed whenever they state that their project will benefit Tribes. This is especially important when a project proposal can receive increased project ranking if it benefits Tribes or DACs.
6. Future IRWM rounds should provide incentives for interregional IRWM collaboration. In many cases, it would be beneficial to collaborate and share resources, and to work with adjacent IRWM funding regions to apply in both regions for overlapping projects. IRWM funding regions could choose to collaborate with neighboring IRWM funding regions to co-fund projects where the project footprint or benefit overlaps with other adjacent IRWM funding regions to result in broader watershed-wide solution-oriented projects.