

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Japanese and Local Filmmakers visit Sinkyone Land

Two documentary films that will feature the cultural land conservation work of the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council involved recent visits to southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino Counties where filmmakers interviewed Tribal community members and filmed restoration and stewardship projects on the 3,900-acre InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness land and the adjacent 7,250-acre Sinkyone Wilderness State Park.

The first film is designed to complement a book that will feature 14 case studies in 5 states where Tribes and Tribal organizations like the InterTribal Sinkyone Council are utilizing land trusts, conservation easements, and other innovative tools to achieve access, stewardship, restoration, and cultural conservation goals for important areas within their ancestral territorial lands. The book examines successful partnerships and other collaborative efforts between Tribes and land trusts working together to achieve mutual goals of protecting and stewarding the environment, as well as the development of Tribal conservation organizations. The work of the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council is featured prominently, as the organization is believed to be the first Tribal entity in the U.S. to have entered into a conservation easement with a private land trust (The Pacific Forest Trust). Another land trust, the Whitethorn-based Sanctuary Forest, holds a separate conservation on the InterTribal land that prohibits industrial logging.

The book's author, Beth Rose Middleton, is a UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow in the departments of Environmental Science & Policy and Native American Studies at the University of California at Davis. The book, designed and published by the Tribal Liaison of the California Association of Regional Conservation Districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture, will be released in early December. Ms. Middleton explained that the concept of a film to complement the book came about through discussions with the Native American Land Conservancy, which provided funding assistance for the book's publication. The Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development, based in Arcata, was chosen to produce the film as an educational tool to showcase 3 Tribal conservation projects in California that are included as case studies in Middleton's book. One of the case studies is the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. Middleton explained that the film will provide a visual journey of how Native peoples' control of their lands has been severely reduced over time, and how Tribal groups are now working to reverse this paradigm of loss by acquiring cultural properties and reestablishing Native stewardship within high priority areas of their ancestral territories. Seventh Generation founder and CEO Christopher Peters will narrate the film, a DVD of which will be included with the book.

On October 3, Chris "Mo" Hollis, Seventh Generation's Media Director, filmed watershed and salmonid stream restoration work conducted through the collaborative efforts of the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council and the North Coast Redwoods District of California State Parks. Filming included the Dark Gulch watershed rehabilitation project in southern Sinkyone where several miles of abandoned logging roads were treated in 1992. Archival photos of clearcut

logging in the early 1980s by former owner Georgia-Pacific were compared with the current state of the restored and protected watershed, which has seen substantial re-growth of the forest and dramatic improvement of water quality. Hollis spent October 4 interviewing the Council's board members about the formation in 1986 of the unique Tribal conservation consortium whose work has resulted in bringing local Tribal members back to the land of their ancestors in a role that is beneficial to the land and the people. It is hoped that the book and the DVD will promote more partnerships between Tribes and conservation organizations and result in the formation of Native land trusts throughout the U.S.

The second film is being produced by a Tokyo-based film company that sent a crew to California last week to conduct on-site filming of the Council's work for inclusion in a documentary entitled "Learning from Wisdom of Native Americans". The film will focus on the Native ecological perspectives and the environmental protection initiatives of the Council and two other Tribal groups, the Seneca of New York and the Diné (Navajo) of the Southwest. The film, to be broadcast on Japanese satellite television later this year, will focus on the cultural land stewardship efforts of these 3 North American Tribal groups and is part of a multi-year program that will produce a series of educational films about the land ethic of indigenous peoples throughout the world. The company recently completed filming of the indigenous Maori people of New Zealand and the indigenous Sámi people of Northern Europe.

The film team stayed at the historic Benbow Inn where they were joined by Council board members and staff. Wailaki Tribal members who have been involved in cultural-ecological restoration efforts at Sinkyone traveled with the Council and the filmmakers to restoration sites in the Upper Mattole. State Parks ranger Kevin Harder of Shadowbrook joined the group at Four Corners. The group examined the Council's work in the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park that in 2005 removed nearly 6 miles of abandoned logging roads through a heavy equipment operator's training program for Tribal members that was funded by a \$252,713 grant to the Council from the State Water Resources Control Board. The Council also hired Tribal members of Sinkyone, Wailaki, Wiyot, Mattole, Bear River, Yurok, Lassik, and other Tribal ancestry for the overall multi-year watershed restoration and cultural resource monitoring effort in the Upper Mattole and several coastal watersheds located within ancestral Sinkyone territory. The watershed rehabilitation project, a collaborative effort between the Council and State Parks, resulted in the treatment of more than 50 miles of abandoned logging roads. The removal of a majority of Sinkyone's abandoned logging roads was required before the State Park Commission could designate the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park as an official state wilderness, which occurred in November 2006.

Terry Robinson, a Wailaki resident from Garberville and member of Round Valley Indian Tribes, explained to the filmmakers the methodology behind the watershed work that he participated in as a dozer operator, noting the benefits to water quality and the land's native plant and animal communities. He pointed out how treated slopes were stabilized through the work he and other Tribal members completed, noting the natural regeneration of native plants that are now covering formerly roaded areas. Robinson's son Terry Michael Robinson, also a Round Valley Tribal member, was trained on the project as a Native American cultural resource monitor and has worked on this and other construction projects in the region to ensure protection for sensitive cultural/archaeological resources.

The group proceeded south on the Usal Road, stopping to film the Wolf Creek watershed and the Sally Bell Grove. Round Valley Tribal member Ronald Lincoln, Sr., whose ancestors include members of the Bell family, as well as Lucy Young and Chief Lassik, had been involved in the initial efforts in the early 1980s to organize Tribal involvement in the movement to save the Sally Bell Grove. He reminisced about how meaningful it was for him as a Wailaki person to return to this special place after 25 years. He noted that in those early days of the movement he and other Wailaki people had demanded removal of a sign from the Sinkyone State Park that had stated the Sinkyone were an extinct people. He explained how the Council's work has brought together local Tribal members of many backgrounds to protect the Sinkyone land and to reestablish their role as its stewards. Ron offered a prayer song to honor the ancestors and the land, and his powerful voice could be heard echoing through the Grove's old growth redwoods.

Next stop was filming of the Council's stream habitat restoration sites in the lower reaches of Wolf Creek, near its estuary. Atta Stevenson, member of the Cahto Tribal Council and an InterTribal Sinkyone board member, explained the importance to Tribal communities of protecting the water, which equals life. She stressed the eons-long history that Native people have in taking care of the earth and how their cultural heritage is inseparable from the land's natural ecology. She emphasized the importance of the Council's work to promote the healing of the Sinkyone land so that it can someday be brought back into balance. Hawk Rosales, the Council's executive director, pointed out the in-stream logs the Council and State Parks had recently installed to create scour pools and refugia for young salmonids. He noted that the partnership between State Parks and the Council took many years to develop and that several important collaborative projects focused on the recovery of Sinkyone's cultural ecology have resulted.

The group continued down to the Hotel Gulch campsites in Usal, where they were greeted by more than 20 singers and dancers of the Pinoleville Pomo Nation Youth Group, who blessed the land and the people with traditional songs and dances. Their presence at Sinkyone added to the strength of the Sinkyone movement that has brought together local Tribal members of many ancestral backgrounds to celebrate their common bond of caring for the land and reviving their cultural connections. The day concluded with a dinner of salmon cooked under the stars by Frankie Esquivel and others. Everyone enjoyed and appreciated the Copper River salmon that was generously donated by fishermen Timothy Metz, a local forester and land restorationist, and Dune Lankard, a Native Athabaskan of the Eagle Clan from the Eyak Nation in the Copper River Delta.

For more information, call 707-468-9500 or visit the Council's page at the Trees Foundation website: <http://www.treesfoundation.org/affiliates/specific-22> or its page at the Garberville Redway Area Chamber of Commerce website: <http://garberville.org/site002/non-profits/intertribal-sinkyone-wildernes-council.html>