

Oregon Tribes Aid Yurok Transition

The Yurok Transition Team, of Eureka, California was mandated by public law 100-580 to study and investigate all aspects of tribal development and operation. The goal was to enable the Yurok people to identify the most effective, successful and unique methods to develop and operate their own tribal government.

In the Yurok Settlement Act, Section 10, the Economic Self Sufficiency Plan (ESSP) was to be completed within two years of the date the Settlement Act was enacted on Oct. 31, 1988. Because the BIA and the Team are in the initial stages of conducting this ESSP, we identified three near-by Tribes: Klamath, Grand Ronde and Warm Springs; who have created or are in the process of creating an ESSP. We felt that it was necessary to investigate what steps those Tribes took in conducting their ESSP, the type of budget they needed and need to implement their plan, how they operate tribal government, and what they would do differently if they could start over again. Some of the most important highlights from this learning experience are outlined below.

Communication is Key

All three Tribes emphasized the importance of communication, between tribal government and Tribal members; between the levels of tribal government and between tribal government and outside entities (e.g. local/state/federal govt.) Communications through regular community meetings, tribal staff meetings, newsletters, committee activities, radio shows and especially video presentation were recommended.

You need to know what you want, so you don't have to take whatever is pushed your way.

Planning is crucial to Tribal development and operation, as it enables a Tribe to seek its own vision rather than just reacting to outside activities. The Yuroks learned that the first step in any planning process is to gather baseline information. All three Tribes took that first step of data collection which then culminated in a "Needs Assessment Survey" of their Tribal members. These surveys identified Tribal needs in housing, health, education and employment.

Once an understanding of tribal needs and available resources is acquired, the legislative bodies (Tribal Council) can identify the overall Tribal vision and set policies.

Once policies are in place, the executive/management staff can carry out the day-to-day operations. This planning process insures that all layers of Tribal government are accountable to the vision of the Tribe. It also fosters a stable Tribal government.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment

It is key to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of your membership to determine such things as average income, unemployment rate, education levels, as well as what type of jobs, income and economic development the membership wants. This is one of the first steps in tribal development planning. The Team has already conducted a housing survey and is developing a health survey.

Include your Cultural values in all areas.

The Yuroks also found out that it is important to work your own unique cultural values into every phase of Tribal development and operation. It was strongly recommended that they do this starting now, rather than trying to go back later and get input.

Stable Government is crucial to success

All three Tribes stressed the need for a stable government system, both for having a functional tribal government as well as for establishing credibility in the world.

A variety of ways were recommended to achieve this stability.

1. Establish Tribal Vision first.
2. Separate legislative and executive powers in the constitution, so you can keep council members from reaching into program management. All three Tribes emphasized that the Council makes policy, while management carries it out.
3. Continually define legislative versus executive and administrative roles during the day-to-day operations.
4. Create staggered, 3 year council terms and keep overall council size small.
5. Provide "due process" to Tribal members in all operations.

Cooperation versus Confrontation

Your ability to negotiate within Tribal structure as well as with outside groups will play a big part in how fast you are able to develop. If you are able to create a "team" atmosphere, then your projects will go more smoothly and you will be acting on your own vision rather than reacting to a series of confrontations. Both Warm Springs and Grand Ronde said that courts are always a last resort for them. They still fight, they just fight fair by incorporating due process and communicating constantly with all who are involved.

Make BIA/IHS part of your team

Both Warm Springs and Grand Ronde bring BIA and IHS into their team as players from the start. Warm Springs actually rents a part of their Tribal Office space to the BIA. Both Tribes said it is best to work from the local up to the national level; they will bump you back down to the local level for review, and your project will be delayed.

If you want to be treated like a government, then act like one

Warm Springs and Grand Ronde both maintained that it strengthens sovereignty to show that you have your own vision, your own unique culture and your own process to meet the needs of your members.

Conclusion

The trip to Oregon was educational as well as inspirational. For example, Warm Springs Tribe brings in about 8 million dollars annually, only a small fraction of which comes from federal sources. However, they didn't get there overnight. It took them 150 years and a lot of blood, sweat and tears, and even now they work hard for their successes.

We have seen that the potential of a Tribe is tremendous in this day and age, and we have also learned of the need for careful planning prior to taking actions. All three Oregon Tribes commented on the unique opportunity the Yurok Transition Team "era" offers the Yurok People. A two-year period focused on (among other things) the acquisition of baseline data will enable the Interim Council to initiate Tribal development from a strong foundation.

Throughout the tour, we were greatly impressed by the gracious hospitality of all the Tribal Council members and staff people that we had the opportunity to talk with. This trip was extremely helpful for both the Team and the BIA. Now we can understand the mistakes that other Tribes have made; and learn from this rather than trying to re-invent the wheel. From this trip the Team hopes to initiate the development of a plan of action the Yurok Tribe an ESSP that they can take all the way to the bank.

-courtesy of Yurok News

Bachelor of Science Degree in Forestry

at the School of Forestry
Northern Arizona University
Native American Forestry Program

The undergraduate forestry program at Northern Arizona University is unlike any other forestry program throughout the country. It is unique in that the second two years of study are multiresource oriented rather than specialty-oriented. The first two years of study are used to meet general University regulations and prerequisites for entrance into junior level forestry courses. This includes basic course work in the biological and social sciences, quantitative and communications skills, and introductions to traditional forestry applications in measurements, dendrology (tree identification), management, and policy. As juniors and seniors, students pursue a specialized integrated forest management program consisting of three semester-long, 16-credit courses of continuous, integrated, and team-taught instruction.

The multiresource instruction has three semesters. The first professional semester emphasizes the study of forest ecology, silviculture (the development and care of forests), forest products and services. The second semester consists of managerial aspects of decision theory, finance, economic, political, and social analyses, and the technical aspects of natural resource management. In the third semester, students collect multiresource inventory data in the field and prepare a comprehensive multiresource management plan.

For undergraduates, financial aid can be acquired by applying for a Pell Grant or scholarships offered by NAU which can be obtained by calling or writing to Vita Allison or Patricia Sprengeler, Office of Student Financial Aid, NAU, P.O. Box 4108, Flagstaff, AZ., 86011-4108; telephone (602) 523-4951. The Office of Student Financial Aid is located in Room 308 of the Gammage Administration Services Building. Also students are encouraged to apply for financial assistance from their tribal organizations.

Admission to the School of Forestry undergraduate program is based on completion of all prerequisites, grades, and recommendations. The Native American Forestry Program will assist incoming undergraduates to identify their course of study and orient them to current organizations on NAU campus for academic advisement and social activities.

For further information, contact either Dr. Ron Trospen, Director, at (602) 523-6653, or Randy Roberts, Program Coordinator, at (602) 523-6143.



Back to School Gathering

All returning and new students, the Tribal Education Program will be sponsoring our 1990-1991 Back to School gathering on September 7, 1990 at the Chemeketa Community College, Salem, Oregon; Bldg. 3, Rm. 105. Times for this workshop will be 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. If you have questions regarding your application, financial aid, class registration or want to share experiences regarding school, please plan on attending. If you want more information, please call Dean Azule at 879-5211. Lunch will be provided and parents are welcome to attend! See you on Sept. 7th!