



**Staff Recommendation**

October 6, 2022

**Action Item:**  
**Consideration and Approval of Disbursement of Funds to the Tribal  
Marine Stewards Network**

Michael Esgro, Senior Biodiversity Program Manager & Tribal Liaison

**Recommended Action:** Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council approve the disbursement of up to \$3,610,000 to the Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes as follows:

- 5.1 \$910,000 to Resighini Rancheria
- 5.2 \$700,000 to Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
- 5.3 \$700,000 to Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
- 5.4 \$700,000 to Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
- 5.5 \$600,000 to Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

This investment will fund the Tribal Marine Stewards Network's monitoring and community engagement work for the next three years, allow for the expansion of the Network via inclusion of a fifth partner tribe in southern California, and support further organizational development of the Network.

**Location:** Statewide

**Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives:** Goal 2: Advance Equity Across Ocean and Coastal Policies and Actions; Objective 2.1: Enhance Engagement with Tribes; Goal 3: Enhance Coastal and Marine Biodiversity; Objective 3.1: Protect and Restore Coastal and Marine Ecosystems

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**Exhibits:** Letters of Support

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## Findings and Resolution:

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 et seq. of the Public Resources Code:

“The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) hereby approves the disbursement of up to \$3,610,000 to the Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes as follows:

- \$910,000 to Resighini Rancheria
- \$700,000 to Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
- \$700,000 to Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
- \$700,000 to Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
- \$600,000 to Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians

This investment will fund the Tribal Marine Stewards Network's monitoring and community engagement work for the next three years, allow for the expansion of the Network via inclusion of a fifth partner tribe in southern California, and support further organizational development of the Network.

This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of funds, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director detailed work plans, schedules, staff requirements, budgets, and the names of any contractors intended to be used to complete the projects, as well as discrete deliverables that can be produced in intervals to ensure the projects are on target for successful completion. All projects will be developed under a shared understanding of process, management and delivery.”

## Executive Summary:

Historically, resource management in California has failed to adequately consider the rights, perspectives, and traditional knowledges held by California Native American tribes. Guided by recent state policy aimed at addressing these wrongs, and in the spirit of enhancing tribal engagement across all aspects of OPC's work, in 2020 OPC approved the disbursement of \$1,000,000 to establish a Tribal Marine Stewards Network pilot program focused on marine protected area (MPA) monitoring and rooted in shared priorities between tribes and the state. Since the inception of the pilot program, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network has made significant strides toward enhancing the capacity of its partner tribes to steward

their ancestral lands and waters. Moving forward, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network seeks to continue its monitoring, outreach, and organizational development work. The substantial additional investment recommended here will support these activities for an additional three years, allow a southern California tribe to join the Network, and foster the further development of the Network as an enduring statewide program.

## Background & Project Details:

Native peoples have inhabited California since time immemorial. Despite a history of violence, exploitation, and dispossession perpetrated by the state, which forcefully separated tribal communities from their ancestral territories and cultural practices, California's tribes have never ceded their inherent obligation to manage coastal and marine resources sustainably, in accordance with traditional lifeways and in support of a resilient ocean for all beings. Tribes remain the original stewards of California's coast and ocean and continue to practice reciprocity with their ancestral territories.

Historically, resource management in California has failed to adequately consider the rights, perspectives, and traditional knowledges held by tribes. In an effort to begin to address these wrongs, in 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued [Executive Order N-15-19](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf)<sup>1</sup>, acknowledging and apologizing on behalf of the state for past harms and creating a tribally-led, consultation-informed Truth and Healing Council to address the impacts of these harms, which persist to this day. Additionally, in 2020, Governor Newsom issued a [Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands](https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/9.25.20-Native-Ancestral-Lands-Policy.pdf)<sup>2</sup>, which encourages state entities to seek opportunities to support tribes' co-management of, and access to, natural lands that are within a tribe's ancestral territory and under the ownership or control of the State of California.

Guided by these bold, transformative policies, and in the spirit of enhancing tribal engagement across all aspects of OPC's work (Objective 2.1 in OPC's Strategic Plan), in 2020 OPC [approved the disbursement](https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20200619/Item6a_TribalMarineStewardsNetwork_FINAL.pdf)<sup>3</sup> of \$1,000,000 to establish a Tribal Marine Stewards Network pilot program. The Tribal Marine Stewards Network was

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/9.25.20-Native-Ancestral-Lands-Policy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda\\_items/20200619/Item6a\\_TribalMarineStewardsNetwork\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.opc.ca.gov/webmaster/ftp/pdf/agenda_items/20200619/Item6a_TribalMarineStewardsNetwork_FINAL.pdf)

modeled after successful indigenous monitoring programs that have been implemented in other parts of the world, such as the Coastal Guardian Watchmen in British Columbia and the Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers in Australia. The pilot program sought to build on past successes related to tribal engagement in MPA management specifically, such as the collection of indigenous traditional knowledge by north coast tribes during the state's baseline MPA monitoring period. The goal of the pilot program was to establish a statewide, tribally-led monitoring and community engagement program, focused on MPA monitoring and rooted in priorities shared between tribes and the state. Through this unique and novel collaboration, both tribes and OPC hoped to significantly advance efforts to support tribal stewardship and adopt meaningful co-management measures. Four partner tribes participated in the pilot program: Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Resighini Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, and the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Two nongovernmental organizations, the California Indian Environmental Alliance and Ecotrust, provided critical logistical support and technical assistance to tribes.

Since the inception of the pilot program, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network has made significant strides toward enhancing the capacity of California's coastal tribes to monitor and manage their ancestral lands and waters. Partner tribes have initiated on-the-ground monitoring work that is helping both tribes and state agencies better understand the climate vulnerability of natural and cultural resources. New community engagement programs are reconnecting tribal youth with traditional stewardship practices and enhancing tribal access to the coast and ocean. Additionally, through strategic planning efforts, partner tribes have begun to build the architecture that will make the Tribal Marine Stewards Network a sustainable and enduring program into the future.

Moving forward, the Tribal Marine Stewards Network seeks to continue and expand its monitoring, outreach, and organizational development work. Specific priorities identified by partner tribes for this new round of funding include:

- 3-dimensional mapping of rocky intertidal habitats
- Biological monitoring of culturally important species, such as sea stars and kelp
- Archaeological surveys to assess the potential climate vulnerability of natural and cultural resources
- Gathering of Traditional Knowledges
- Programs to support increased tribal access to the coast and ocean

- Protection of sacred sites through education and advocacy
- Continued planning for scaling up and including more tribes

Additional funding will support this important monitoring and community engagement work as well as the further organization of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network as an independent entity. Specifically, funds disbursed to each tribe will support tribal government staff, travel to meetings, field gear and supplies, camps and workshops, and technical assistance. Funding will also support the creation of a development plan outlining next steps for further scaling up the Network and extending opportunities for participation to more tribes across the state. Importantly, the funding recommended here will allow for the inclusion of a fifth tribe, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, in the Network. Importantly, this tribe is located in southern California, which is a region that has been relatively underrepresented in many of OPC's tribal engagement efforts to date.

The expansion of the Tribal Marine Stewards Network through investment in each of the five partner tribes will build upon the early successes of the pilot program and support the implementation of OPC's forthcoming Tribal Engagement Strategy, which is currently undergoing tribal consultation and will be brought to OPC for consideration and possible adoption in December 2022. This work will also contribute to broader state priorities, such as the elevation of tribal stewardship as a critical component of California's initiative to conserve 30% of its lands and coastal waters by 2030. Most importantly, it will enhance the capacity of coastal tribes to steward their ancestral lands and waters, a priority shared between tribes and state government and an important step in beginning to right historic injustices.

### **About the Grantees**

The Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes, which include Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, Resighini Rancheria, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, and Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, are a group of California Native American tribes exercising their inherent rights, responsibilities, and obligations to steward ancestral territories and practice cultural lifeways. The Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes aim to return management of their ocean and coastal territories to tribes, and to ensure Indigenous knowledge drives decision-making resulting in healthy and viable communities and ecosystems for future generations.

**Project Timeline**

- October 2022: funding awarded
- December 2022: grant agreements executed with partner tribes
- January 2023 – December 2025: Partner tribes conduct research and monitoring activities; partner tribes conduct outreach and community engagement activities; partner tribes collaborate on organizational development, strategic planning, and approach for further expansion of the Network
- December 2025: grant completion date; all grant deliverables due to OPC

**Project Financing:**

Staff recommends that OPC authorize encumbrance of up to \$3,610,000 to the Tribal Marine Stewards Network partner tribes as outlined above.

Ocean Protection Council	\$3,610,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,610,000</b>

The anticipated source of funds will be OPC’s FY 22/23 coastal resilience appropriation of General Fund and FY 18/19 appropriation of Environmental License Plate Funds.

**Consistency with California Ocean Protection Act:**

The proposed project is consistent with the California Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, because it is consistent with trust-fund allowable projects, defined in Public Resources Code Section 35650(b)(2).

**Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):**

The proposed project is categorically exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to 14 Cal. Code of Regulations Section 15306 because the project involves only data collection, research and resource evaluation activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource.