

# Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network

## Tribal Engagement Strategy

Version 1.0

Final Draft



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## Overview

For time immemorial, the oak ecosystems of the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network (KSON) geography have been stewarded by tribes of aboriginal peoples, representing a cultural approach to traditional resources, including acorns of several oak species and associated plants and wildlife, using fire and other tools. The forced relocation of tribes beginning in the mid-1800s and policies and programs initiated during European-American colonial settlement excluded indigenous peoples from land management, severely disadvantaged tribal nations and communities, and raised barriers to maintaining healthy ecosystems and indigenous cultures. Ongoing cultural ineptness has further excluded tribes from landscape-scale restoration projects. KSON is committed to meaningful inclusion of and collaboration with tribal communities, thus our tribal engagement strategy invites tribal members with ancestral ties to the geography to participate as working group members, ecocultural specialists, and cultural and tribal ambassadors. As KSON advances its collaborative, inclusive approach, each party to KSON is encouraged to also sustain and build their relationship with Tribes and Tribal communities.

## Strategic Goals

- Foster meaningful engagement with Tribes having ancestral ties to the geography throughout planning, monitoring, and implementation to strengthen restoration efforts and culturally beneficial outcomes for tribal communities by incorporating ecocultural approaches and Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK).
- Gain affirmative tribal, community, and multi-organizational support for KSON actions on federal lands.
- Expand collaborative dialogues to support private landowners interested in partnering with cultural practitioners and providing access for oak restoration projects and/or applying ecocultural approaches.

## Guiding Objectives

- Catalyze tribal inclusion and purview in KSON project collaboration for oak restoration through implementation of a communication strategy and community and tribal engagement.
- Integrate cultural stewardship approaches into conservation implementation within the framework of the Strategic Action Plan and encourage Tribal monitoring of cultural resources during project implementation to help ensure that culturally significant sites and resources are protected.
- Build upon KSON strategies and past accomplishments and continue to ensure tribal staff and elected leaders participate in implementation reviews and provide regular briefs as part of a collaborative implementation approach.
- Ensure tribal participation is adequately funded, with consistent, transparent, and equitable allocation of those funds.
- Refine, adapt, and improve this strategy through the duration of each project as a

partnership.

- Produce social and economic outcomes for tribal communities, measured by: 1) jobs created for tribal citizens with ancestral ties to the Initiative geography, 2) Native American-owned forestry and other contracting businesses hired, 3) Tribal jobs created within the initiative geography, and 4) Native American-owned forestry businesses incubated.

## Deliverables

1. Formation of Inter-Tribal Advisory Committee (ITAC): Invitations to tribal government delegates, elders, youth, and ecocultural practitioners (e.g., tribally affiliated organization, independent tribal citizen) to serve on an ITAC for the Initiative will be organized by Lomakatsi through ITERP. The ITAC will provide guidance to KSON and Initiative subcommittees regarding tribal interests. Further information on the ITAC role is provided below.
2. Formation of Tribal Engagement Working Group (TEWG): An Initiative-based TEWG will be formed to enhance tribal partnerships, foster tribal inclusion, and improve coordination (see flowchart in Appendix).
  - a. The TEWG will include the ITAC and leads of project-based working groups.
  - b. The meeting frequency of the TEWG will adapt as Initiatives progress, starting at monthly intervals, progressing to quarterly and, at minimum, bi-annually.
  - c. The TEWG will ensure tribal participation in at least the following project elements:
    - i. prescriptions
    - ii. monitoring strategy (planning and development)
    - iii. inclusion on the OWEB-led Technical Review Team
    - iv. engagement strategy (planning, development, and public outreach)
    - v. invitations to tribal departments staff and elected leaders/delegates
3. Government-to-Government Relations:
  - a. Federal agencies have a trust responsibility to sovereign Tribal Nations. Federal statutes require these agencies, including the four represented in KSON, to consult with federally recognized Tribes, and Executive Order 13175 of 2000 (EO 13175), Consultation and Coordination with Tribal Governments, reiterates the government's commitment to fulfilling trust responsibilities and conducting regular, meaningful, and robust consultation with Tribal Nations. Federal agencies have a responsibility to engage with Tribes on matters related to their welfare, interests, and values and they must operate in a way that honors tribal sovereignty. As such, relationships between Tribes and federal agencies are government-to-government and the designated federal agency retains the sole responsibility for conducting formal consultation with Tribal Nations on projects involving federal land, funding, or licensing/permitting.
  - b. KSON recognizes Tribes' vested interest in managing lands, waters, and natural and cultural resources across the multiple jurisdictions of their ancestral territories.

Outreach and engagement by non-federal agency KSON Partners will include federally recognized and non-federally recognized Tribes within and with ancestral ties to the KSON geography, through collaboration and relationship-building with tribal departments, tribal ecocultural practitioners, tribal elders, and tribal-led nonprofit organizations, to achieve the goals outlined in this Strategy.

4. Engagement Plan: The tribal engagement work-plan for each Initiative will be led by Lomakatsi in close collaboration with Partners and include direction and guidance from the federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes of the relevant geography.
5. Listening Sessions: The TEWG will hold listening sessions and meetings to identify tribal interests toward the integration of tribal priorities for site selection and ITEK into conservation actions and to inform the implementation of the tribal engagement strategy.
6. Capacity Building: Explore tribal interests and priorities to support—financially or with partner capacity—development of a tribal workforce for long-term stewardship of ancestral lands within the focal geography. Leverage Lomakatsi’s Tribal Partnerships Program and workforce training models.
7. First Food Access: Explore the potential to identify and foster First Food access through voluntary agreements with private landowners and federal agency partners.
  - a. Example: Partners engage with a private landowner and organize a meeting to which tribal cultural representatives are invited. Explain available programs and resources (e.g., First Foods and Ecocultural Subsistence Management). Determine landowner interest and proceed.

#### Success Indicators

- Completion of Initiative-based tribal engagement work plans in partnership with ITAC
- Tribal participation in Initiative field reviews (pre-restoration, implementation, and/or post-restoration)
- Number of listening sessions and meetings completed (adequacy determined by ITAC)
- Acres of restoration co-designed and products co-produced with tribal partners
- Socioeconomic benefits to Tribes and tribal communities
- Integration of ITEK into restoration activities with attention to amplified ecological benefits at culturally important locations
- Improved efficiency and efficacy for carrying out core implementation strategies
- Voluntary agreements with private landowners and federal agency partners to foster First Food access

## TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AUDIENCES

KSON tribal engagement will reflect diverse, inter-tribal ancestral and community ties to the initiative geography as described below.

Federally recognized tribes with ceded lands and ancestral ties to KSON geography	Non-federally recognized tribes with ancestral ties to KSON geography	Federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes outside KSON geography with ancestral ties to project area	Tribal members, organizations, and affiliates with close socio-economic ties to geography
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### Partner Roles



#### **Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership (ITERP)**

Partners are collaborating through the Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership (ITERP), hosted and convened by Lomakatsi Restoration Project, and its Collaborative Framework Model (CFM) that facilitates the process of collaboration through development of working groups on a project-by-project basis. ITERP is composed of a Steering Committee and Participants representing local tribes, tribal community leaders, federal and state agencies, and nonprofit conservation organizations. Projects are anchored through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and long-term agreements between tribes, agencies, and NGO partners. Lomakatsi facilitates monthly—and in some cases weekly—meetings between partners. As part of this tribally centered collaborative, Lomakatsi and agencies are guided by tribal leadership, and partners strive for a consensus-based, transparent decision-making process within this high functioning partnership, while supporting government-to-government relationships at the request of the Tribes.

#### **Lomakatsi Restoration Project (Lomakatsi)**



Lomakatsi through the ITERP will convene the ITAC for each Initiative, and lead the development and ongoing refinement of the KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy and subsequent or tiered Initiative-based strategies in close collaboration with the ITAC and Partners, to formalize the integration of applied ecological restoration and adaptive management approaches with ITEK. Lomakatsi through ITERP and its Tribal Partnerships Program will lead tribal engagement, co-facilitate the

implementation review process with field tours and ongoing adaptive management, and bring match to launch tribal engagement and support broader engagement and technical assistance.



### **Bureau of Land Management Medford District (BLM)**

For any project or action where the BLM Medford District is responsible for compliance with federal statutes regarding cultural resources and tribal consultation, including the National Historic Preservation Act, the BLM will conduct government-to-government tribal consultation with federally recognized tribes. The BLM will share with project partners, to the extent appropriate, the results of consultation relevant to proposed activities. However, it should be noted that tribes may consider some information private and such information would not be shared with other partners or the public.



### **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)**

TNC is a member of KSON with deep involvement in bringing rigorous science and social value and views together through collaboration and partnership to support restoration of resilience for local social ecological systems, including oak and prairie. TNC also has ongoing land tenure and stewardship responsibility for oak and prairie systems at the culturally significant Table Rocks and deepening relationships and agreements with Tribes there and across numerous other sites and social ecological systems across Oregon and in 70 countries around the globe. In addition, TNC contributes to the development of the KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy.



### **Klamath Bird Observatory (KBO)**

KBO serves as the KSON Coordinator, the partnership lead for the Upper Rogue Oak Initiative, and the liaison with UROI funders. Accordingly, KBO collaborates with Lomakatsi on the development and ongoing refinement of the KSON Tribal Engagement Strategy. KBO staff lead the monitoring and engagement working groups for UROI and will serve on the TEWG. In partnership with LRP, KBO co-leads field tours and implementation reviews and collaborates with tribal partners on all components of that work.

## Inter-Tribal Advisory Committee

Each Initiative-based Inter-Tribal Advisory Committee (ITAC) will be inclusive of diverse tribal engagement audiences (above).

- A. Leadership for ITAC meetings will be provided by the ITERP Chair/Lomakatsi Tribal Partnerships Program Director.
- B. The ITAC will provide input on the prioritization of site selection and integration of ITEK into efforts by the Initiative, and support tribal workforce inclusion and capacity development.
- C. Partners will reach out to include on the ITAC: Representatives of all federally recognized tribes and non-federally recognized tribes within the Initiative geography, including a tribal government delegate, elder, youth, and ecocultural practitioner (e.g., tribally affiliated organization, independent tribal citizen).
- D. ITAC members will be invited to commit a set minimum of hours as determined by the Initiative for quarterly meetings, field visits, and special events/activities. ITAC will appoint representatives to attend Partner meetings. Partners will formalize invitation criteria for the pilot ITAC, including a description of duties and expectations, and co-develop protocols for information sharing during the Initiative (e.g., ITEK, Partner progress, review period for materials).
- E. Partners have a goal to formalize an ITAC for the broader KSON that may provide input in future BN and/or streamline and strengthen coordination of tribal engagement across multiple Initiatives.
- F. Partners, in collaboration with ITAC, will develop a budget and funding sources to cover stipends for costs associated with ITAC travel, lodging, and time committed to the Initiative.

## Tribal Ancestral Ties to KSON Geography

- ❖ Shasta, Takelma, and Latgawa peoples
- ❖ Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw
- ❖ Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- ❖ Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- ❖ Coquille Indian Tribe
- ❖ Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- ❖ Elk Valley Rancheria
- ❖ Karuk Tribe
- ❖ The Klamath Tribes
- ❖ Pit River Tribe
- ❖ Quartz Valley Indian Community
- ❖ Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation
- ❖ Winnemem Wintu Tribe

*Indigenous Stewardship & Collaborative Co-Management  
of Oak Ecocultural Systems*

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## Summary

The Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network (KSON) developed and adopted a Tribal Engagement Strategy, which will serve as a framework for enhanced partnership between KSON, southern Oregon and northern California tribes, and bordering tribes with ancestral geography, in forest and aquatic habitat restoration opportunity areas.

The Tribal Engagement Strategy was developed through the Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership, managed by tribal leadership through Lomakatsi Restoration Project's Tribal Partnerships Program, in close collaboration with KSON partners. The Tribal Engagement Strategy serves as a guide for planning and implementing successful ecological restoration initiatives, long-term partnerships, community climate adaptation, and hope and healing in the era of megafires.

### I. Background

For time immemorial, the oak habitats of the Rogue River and Klamath River watersheds have been stewarded by Indigenous peoples. Tribes have cultural knowledge of oak woodlands, and regard plants, animals, natural resources, and natural processes as relations. These relations and cultural beneficial uses of the resources include oaks, acorns, fire, and many other oak woodland-associated species. Balanophagy, or acorn eating, was often the most characteristic feature of the aboriginal domestic economy in oak geography (E.W. Gifford, *California Balanophagy*, p. 87-98, *Essays in Anthropology*, presented to A. L. Kroeber (1936).) Over time, tribal people developed sophisticated stewardship practices that shaped landscapes while foraging, gathering and hunting for ceremonial and subsistence purposes. As a reflection of their value to indigenous communities, oak woodlands are often located near ancestral village sites.

**Aboriginal fire** is an especially effective tool that tribes use to enhance production of resources and ecosystem services by regularly igniting low-intensity surface fires in oak stands (Kimmerer and Lake 2001, Blackburn and Anderson 1993). Regular burning maintains oak conifer forests, woodlands, and savanna cultural landscapes in a more open state, rich in natural resources and biodiversity, and also enhances the structure and quality of critical food and fiber resources (Boyd 1999, Rentz 2003, Halpern 2016). Some traditional benefits of well-managed oak habitats include food and fiber resources such as acorns, bulbs, deer meat, and regalia, as well as aesthetic benefits, and community protection from severe fire (Hosten et al 2006).

## Ancestral Homelands

Aboriginal peoples of the KSON geography include members of several different tribal nations, languages, and/or bands. Tribal descendants may identify with one or more larger tribal nations, or smaller autonomous bands or groups. The KSON geography is within the aboriginal homelands of the Lower Rogue River Athabascan tribes, which include Upper Coquille, Shasta Costa, Tututni; Upper Rogue River Athabascan (Galice-Applegate) tribes, including: Taltushtuntede tribe (Galice Creek Area) and Dakubetede tribe (Applegate Area); Takelma tribes-Latgawa (Upland Takelma), Dageima (Lowland or River Takelma); Shasta tribe and associated bands spanning the Middle Rogue, Klamath, Shasta, Salmon, and Scott Rivers, and their tributaries; and Upper Klamath Basin, Rogue River watershed divide - the Klamath tribe.

The complicated history of treaties and forced removal of various native people of the Rogue and Klamath rivers resulted in several federally recognized tribal governments, including: Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, The Klamath Tribes, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation, Elk Valley Rancheria, The Karuk Tribe, and Quartz Valley Indian Reservation. Because treaties were made with members of several different tribal nations without proper recognition of cultural groups, these federally recognized tribes most often include members that affiliate with one or more ancestral group or cultural affiliation. In addition, some indigenous people of KSON geography have thus far been denied treaty rights and federal recognition of their tribal affiliation. KSON tribal engagement will include formal and informal consultation with federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes, as well as invitations to delegated and individual cultural leaders and practitioners to participate in project development, implementation, and monitoring.



"The Circle has healing power. In the Circle, we are all equal. When in the Circle, no one is in front of you. No one is behind you. No one is above you. No one is below you. The Sacred Circle is designed to create unity. The Hoop of Life is also a circle. On this hoop, there is a place for every species, every race, every tree, and every plant. It is this completeness of Life that must be respected in order to bring about health on this planet. To understand each other, as the ripples when a stone is tossed into the waters, the Circle starts small and grows...until it fills the whole lake."

– Dave Yakima Chief-Oglala Lakota

## Acknowledging the Land

### Purpose

For more than five hundred years, Native communities across the Americas have demonstrated resilience and resistance in the face of violent efforts to separate them from their land, culture, and each other. Land Acknowledgement is a critical public intervention, a necessary step toward honoring Sovereign Nations and Native communities and enacting the much larger project of healing and reconciliation—also recognizing that aboriginal people, their tribal governments, and traditional communities are still here.

The towns and cities of the Klamath-Siskiyou geography have been built on aboriginal land and we pay tribute to the first, best stewards who have maintained the health and beauty of these lands, through the careful stewardship of forests, waterways, fish, and wildlife until authority entrusted to them was forcibly revoked. The “Cultural Beneficial and Traditional Uses” and protection of natural resources continues today through collaborative partnerships and planning that includes Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK), supporting subsistence lifestyles, and elevating ecocultural restoration and sacred site protection with our tribal partners.

### Land Acknowledgment

Partners of the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network acknowledge the ancestral lands of the tribes and Sovereign Nations that live in what is now called the Klamath Siskiyou Region of Oregon and northern California: including the original past, present and future Shasta, Takelma, and Latgawa peoples, and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw; Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; Coquille Indian Tribe; Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians; Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs; Elk Valley Rancheria; The Karuk Tribe; The Klamath Tribes; Ajumawi-Atsuge Nation (Pit River Tribe); Quartz Valley Indian Community; Tolowa Dee-Ni’ Nation; and Winnemem Wintu Tribe.

It is important that we recognize and honor the ongoing legal and spiritual relationship between the land, plants, animals, and people indigenous to this place. The interconnectedness of the people, the land, and the natural environment cannot be overstated; the health of one is necessary for the health of all. We recognize the pre-existing and continued sovereignty of the tribes who have ties to this place and thank them for continuing to share Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and perspective on how we might care for one another and the land, so it can take care of us. We commit to engaging in a respectful and successful partnership as stewards of these lands.

## Tribal Oak Management & Uses

Historical accounts suggest that the Takelma women were primarily responsible for the majority of the seasonal burns used for harvesting foods (Tveskov 2002: 22). They used fire to roast and collect sunflower and tarweed seeds, grasshoppers, and yellow jacket larvae, and to make it easier to locate acorns for collection while also suppressing the boring insects. These regular fires in the oak or grass savanna also encouraged the growth of healthier basketry materials; the same was done at higher elevations to encourage the new growth of beargrass, the leaves of which are another important basket-weaving and regalia making material.



For the Takelma, fire was an essential tool for maintaining healthy food sources year after year. As a result of the tarweed seed, grasshopper, and deer-drive burns, overgrowth of brush and small tree growth was kept to a minimum, maintaining a larger area of open oak savanna. Today we understand that the Takelman use of anthropogenic fire not only provided them with sustainable food resources, but also maintained a healthy habitat for large game animals, encouraged biological diversity, minimized fuels and, subsequently, decreased the probability of catastrophic wildfires (LaLande 2004).

## Lasting Impacts of Colonization

Since Euro-American settlement, most open oak habitat has been lost to urban development and land conversion for agricultural use. Where oak woodlands and savannas still occur, active suppression of natural and anthropogenic fire and the forced decline of indigenous communities playing an active role as ecological caretakers has caused widespread shifts in tree community structure and composition (Crawford et al 2015, Gilligan and Muir 2011, Metlen et al 2018). Trees and shrubs that are not particularly well adapted to frequent fires threaten historically open oak habitats with conversion to closed-canopy woodland or conifer forest as they encroach into these habitats under the absence of fire (Hunter and Barbour 2001). Infilling of oak woodlands and savannas with conifers and other woody plant species can also influence understory plant communities and fuels, leading to lower species diversity, increased homogenization, and increased risk of uncharacteristic fire effects at a landscape scale (Engber et al 2011, Livingston et al 2016). The result of this process is the loss of or reduced density and availability of culturally and ecologically important plants that sustain human communities, populations of wildlife, and pollinating insects alike.

Reduced access and opportunity for indigenous people to participate in culturally identified roles as ecological caretakers, and the impact on their ability to eat subsistence foods, such as acorns, fish, and the local plants and other wildlife, is linked to a rising incidence of health

problems including Type II diabetes, heart disease, and mental health challenges (Norgaard, 2019).

Landscape-scale restoration projects aimed at improving the health of oak woodlands can also enhance sources of traditional subsistence food and medicines, while presenting opportunities for employment of indigenous people in stewarding their ancestral lands. It is therefore critical for organizations concerned about ecological and social health to engage with indigenous people in restoring oak woodland habitats as an act of restorative justice, and also to realize the multiple ecological and social benefits that come from incorporating Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge into restoration planning and evaluation (Long and Lake, 2018).

## II. Strategy Development – *Improving Communication and Engagement with Tribes*

Communication and engagement with tribal partners will align with 1) the KSON MOU and Working Agreement and build upon the Strategic Conservation Action Plan and 2) be included in each restoration initiative, beginning at inception and remaining frequent, consistent, and comprehensive.

For each restoration initiative, project-specific communication and engagement opportunities will be outlined. For example, tribal community engagement for the Upper Rogue Oak Initiative is conducted through the Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership, managed by tribal leadership through Lomakatsi's Tribal Partnerships Program, in close collaboration with partners of the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network. Tribal engagement will include formal and informal correspondence with federally and non-federally recognized tribes with ancestral ties to the project area and invitations to delegated individual cultural leaders and practitioners to participate in project development, implementation, and monitoring as detailed in the best practices below.

In addition, federal agency partners that are members of the Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network will fulfill their legally mandated trust responsibility with tribal governments.

## III. Best Practices for Outreach and Engagement – *Programmatic & Administrative*

- Include tribal engagement funding in grants, agreements and contracts (travel, per diem, lodging, stipends for Field Tours to project sites).
- Follow transparent guidelines for equitable distribution of tribal engagement funding.
- Develop and maintain a Tribal Resource Directory.
- Offer an invite for tribes and their delegates to all decision-making groups that plan, implement, evaluate, and monitor projects.
- Provide timely, accurate and updated information, maps, and meeting minutes.
- Provide regular meeting schedules in advance, and where special meetings or events are being planned, do so with enough time so tribes and their delegates can attend.

- Integrate local Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge with Western science and management approaches, including intergenerational and multidisciplinary methods.
- Share perspectives, common understanding, and creative solutions for mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Provide the legal, federal, state, local and tribal governance mandates, acts, executive orders, bills, etc. that tribes and agencies work with.
- Provide a Land Acknowledgement on a project by project basis. Preference in who provides a Land Acknowledgement would be: 1) Elder or tribal representative of the project geography or ancestral language; 2) A tribal member, staff, or other tribal delegate; 3) Provide talking points and a Land Acknowledgement for an agency, NGO, elected official or other person to deliver, and brief them on the project, history, and inclusion of tribes.
- Follow protocols for sensitive cultural information that align with the United Nations Declaration of Rights for Indigenous People.

*Peer-to-Peer Learning: Addressing the challenges of climate change by learning from and teaching each other*

## Sample Engagement Checklist

### Proposal

1. Identify federally recognized and non-federally recognized tribes with ancestral ties to the project area and the current representatives in the Natural Resources Departments, Culture & Heritage Departments, Tribal Employment Rights Offices, Tribal Council Chairs, elected cultural representatives, and traditional cultural practitioners.
2. Ask if the tribe would like to conceptually support, be involved, and/or remain aware of the project, should funding be secured.
3. Incorporate stipends for tribal elders and representatives (defined above) into the budget.

### Launch

4. Send a letter via email and post to notify tribal representatives that potential work is being developed in their ancestral homelands. This letter should specify:
  - An invitation to collaborate on this initiative as a tribal partner
    - “Collaboration” may be defined as emails or phone calls; participation in the Inter-Tribal Advisory Committee, working groups, and field tours as available; formal letters of support from Tribal Council Chair, cultural representative, or department head; ITEK related to cultural First Foods, medicinal plants, cultural fire practices, or language (place-names); etc.

- Determine whether the tribe would like to be recognized as a project partner and if so, what that would include, i.e. listed in reporting acknowledgments, logo inclusion on project public-facing materials, etc.
  - The general timeline for the initiative and how and when meetings are taking place
  - An invitation to advise on the traditional place-name(s) associated with the geography for consideration when naming the project
  - How tribes will benefit from strategic action plan implementation, e.g., employment opportunities for tribal members and tribal businesses, specific restoration actions, community protection from severe fire
  - Dedication to an ecologically based, ecocultural restoration implementation approach that incorporates the most current Western science and ITEK with consideration for cultural resources, ancestral village sites and artifacts, and First Foods
- 5. Convene a tribal engagement working group and evaluate whether tribal resources are available in the desired quantity and quality. Adapt strategy as needed to incorporate inter-tribal resources.
- 6. Develop a written and spoken land acknowledgement with input from tribal partners.
- 7. Invite tribal partners to review site selection, ranking criteria, and to field tours. Ensure the tribal perspective is captured in notes. Share notes promptly and incorporate feedback.
- 8. Provide a window for feedback on potential tribal land stewardship activities based on the geography, and incorporate them into implementation planning.
- 9. Send a summary of activities when project planning transitions to landowner outreach.

## Implementation

10. Invite Native-owned businesses and tribal restoration forestry crews to consult on archaeological and wildlife surveys, cultural monitoring, NEPA analysis, and workforce opportunities for ecological thinning, prescribed and cultural fire (e.g., Native Star, Inc., Native-X, Inc. Archaeological Services, Lomakatsi Inter-Tribal Ecological Forestry Crew).
11. Provide interim monitoring results as available in shared web location, and a final report with interdisciplinary analyses to measure success, advance knowledge-sharing, and inform future work.
12. Include tribal partners in public-facing success stories and governmental testimony about the initiative.

### Example of Meaningful Engagement – Prescription Review Field Tour

The Upper Rogue Oak Initiative (UROI) convened a preliminary field tour May 23, 2023, to review the first UROI restoration prescription. In total, 23 participants attended, including

representatives of nine agencies/organizations and six tribal partners. During the field tour, partners discussed goals surrounding **ecocultural values**:



- ✓ Overall, this restoration work will benefit culturally important plant species.
- ✓ Cultural plants and medicinal plants were identified at the site. Also, it was apparent we were on a cultural site due to the presence of stone tools and obsidian and jasper flakes.
- ✓ Thinking long term, incorporate people into the concept of “gardens” with an emphasis on creating areas and conditions for vigorous individuals and patches for foraging.
- ✓ Incorporate seasonality into all actions, especially with regards to fire.
- ✓ Create space for ceremonial and cultural work.
- ✓ Reduce barriers for tribal access to the lands.
- ✓ Foster spaces for tribal communities to engage during the restoration process and after.
- ✓ Include intergovernmental coordination with tribes to allow each tribal representative to speak to the ecocultural aspects of the land base and the importance of prioritizing of this project to support oak and cultural plant health and a cultural heritage site.

#### Goals for Partnership Outcomes

- Restoration of landscapes and cultural practices
- Ecocultural restoration for ecosystem and human health
- Integrated landscape restoration strategies with Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and ecocultural stewardship practices
- Identification of current and former productive oak groves for more intensive tending
- Identification and understanding of common metrics and indicators

#### Laws & Legal Mechanisms

- Oregon Department of Education – Senate Bill 13
- Public Law 93-638
- Tribal Forest Protection Act
- National Environmental Policy Act Compliance
- Federal Consultation Policies and State of Oregon Acts, Senate bills and mandates

#### IV. Tribal Priorities for Oak Habitat – *Fostering Socio-Ecological Resilience*

These potential activities would support a diversity of structure and fire effects through formation of gaps and burning, resilience to wildfire, acorn production, formation of habitat trees, and reduced water stress, and support tribal traditions, social interactions, and healthy diet.



##### Observations and Monitoring

- Tree phenology and masting cycles linked to weather and climate
- Tree response to fires and horticultural management
- Wildlife use of and effects on tree and acorn abundance and quality
- Intergenerational place based human-oak relationships linking biophysical and sociocultural systems in oak-dominated habitats

##### Re-tending Strategy

- Apply more intensive management based on aboriginal tending practices in accessible “orchard” areas (near roads, flatter slopes) to enhance production and mitigate losses from fires
- Promote heterogeneity at multiple spatial scales: Thin conifers to create gaps around oaks (larger in orchards than in general forest)
- Reduce fuels around older trees to ensure survival
- Restore fire as a more frequent process
- Design treatments to shift structure back to conditions where fire can be restored
- Retain clumps of high value decadent structures and high canopy cover to support near-term habitat needs

##### Burning Oak-Dominated Habitats

- Reduce acorn pests
- Reduce surface and ladder fuels around desired oaks
- Improve gathering efficiency and acorn quality

##### Spiritual and Ritual Practices

- First Acorn ceremonies
- Prayers for acorn abundance

##### Knocking and Collecting

- Facilitated gathering of ripe acorns
- Reduced competition from wildlife (birds, squirrels)

## V. Measuring Transparency & Collaboration

- Number of meetings with tribal attendance
- Number of cultural monitors, tribal staff and/or elected leaders invited to join discussions
- Number of projects that tribes perform the Cultural Surveys and NEPA analysis
- Native place-names for projects
- Incubated tribal businesses
- Number of projects including a strong ITEK lens
- Collected data with informed consent and respect for the individual, tribe, and ITEK
- Number of tribal workers trained and certified for a natural resource career path
- Number of tribal workers working on project sites
- Number of sub-awards, contracts, and agreements with tribes for local work
- Report card survey of how well we are doing, collected on an annual basis
- Annual report on KSON Tribal Relations

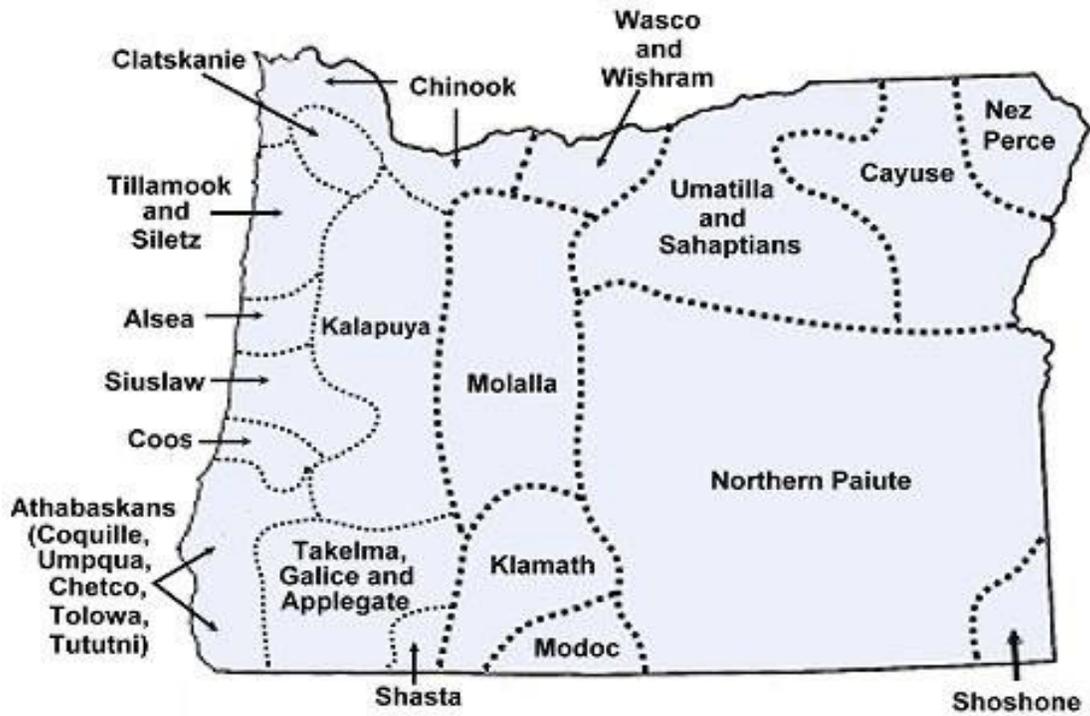
## VI. Conclusion

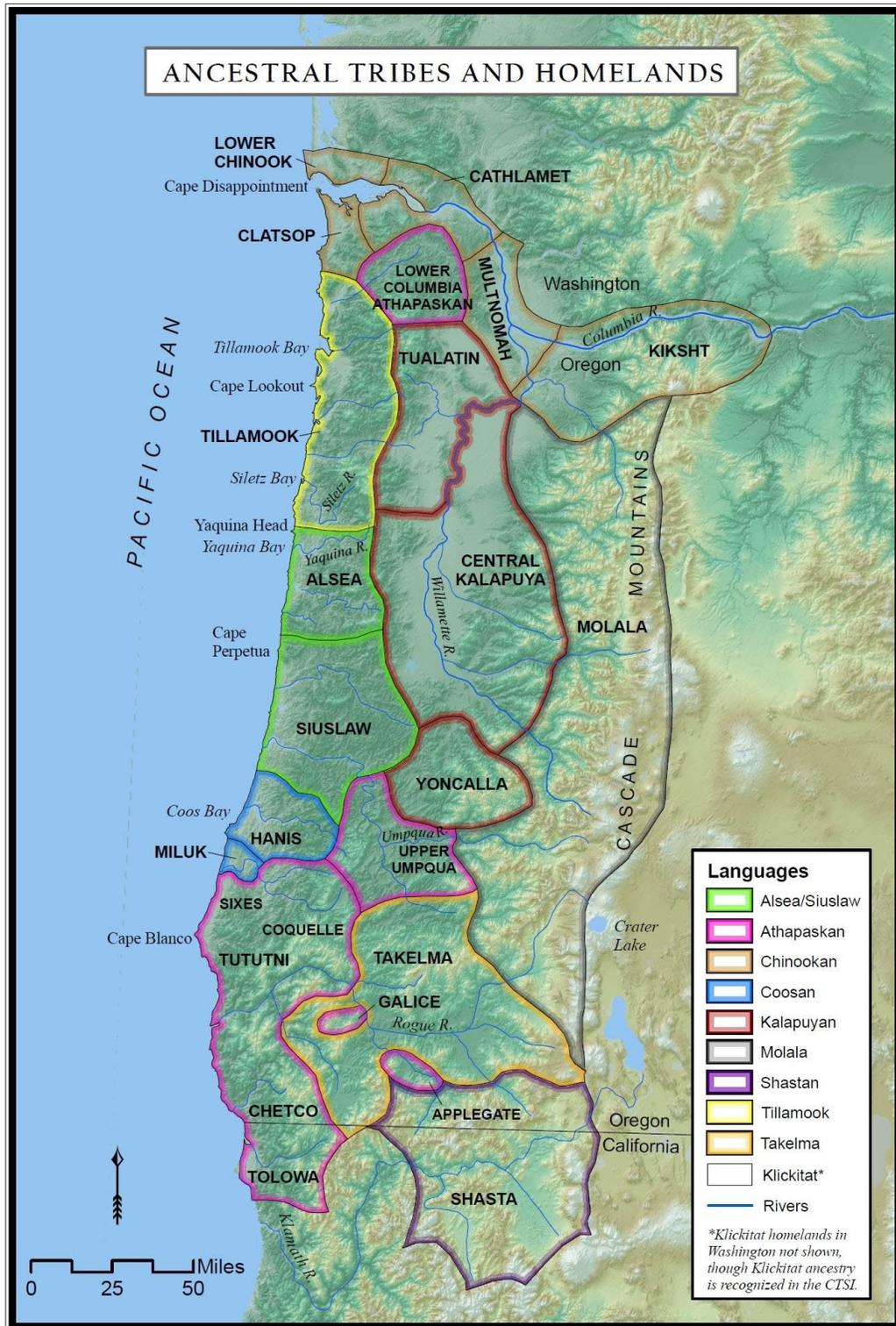
Tribes are the original caretakers of what is now called Oregon and California, from the uplands, to the riverine systems, to the coast. Despite the brutal forced removal of aboriginal people from their land and the state's historical policy of tribal exclusion from land management decisions, tribes continue to honor their sacred commission to sustainably manage and restore forest and aquatic resources in keeping with Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and cultural practices passed from generation to generation.

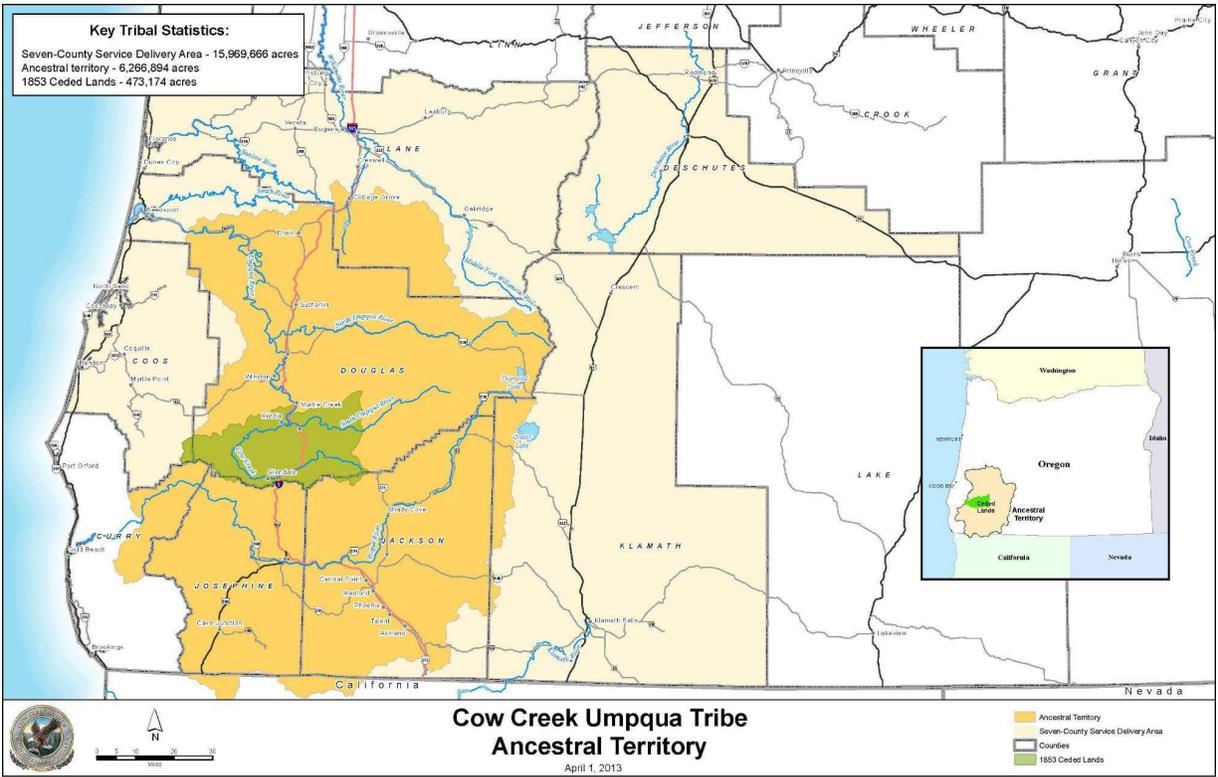
Oregon is facing year after year of devastating wildfire impacts and record-breaking drought conditions. The frequency and severity of these issues is only projected to increase with climate change. Fortunately, major strides are being taken at the state, federal, and tribal government levels to address these challenges, with significant increases in funding for forest and aquatic restoration. Agencies, Tribal Nations, nonprofits, fire districts, and municipalities are working together more than ever before to build community and ecosystem resilience; however, there is still much work ahead.

Throughout the state and region, there is a need for increased dialogue and understanding around tribal partnerships, social justice, equity, and the status of aboriginal tribes as sovereign nations. Incorporating ITEK, ecocultural restoration, cultural fire, and cultural resource protection into collaborative landscape ecosystem resilience initiatives is mutually beneficial and makes projects more successful. Through the collaborative development and implementation of this Tribal Engagement Strategy, KSON aims to build on existing partnerships to enhance tribal engagement in all aspects of conservation work. KSON envisions tribes, agencies, and nonprofits working together in support of resilient ecosystems and communities across the KSON geography.

VII. Maps









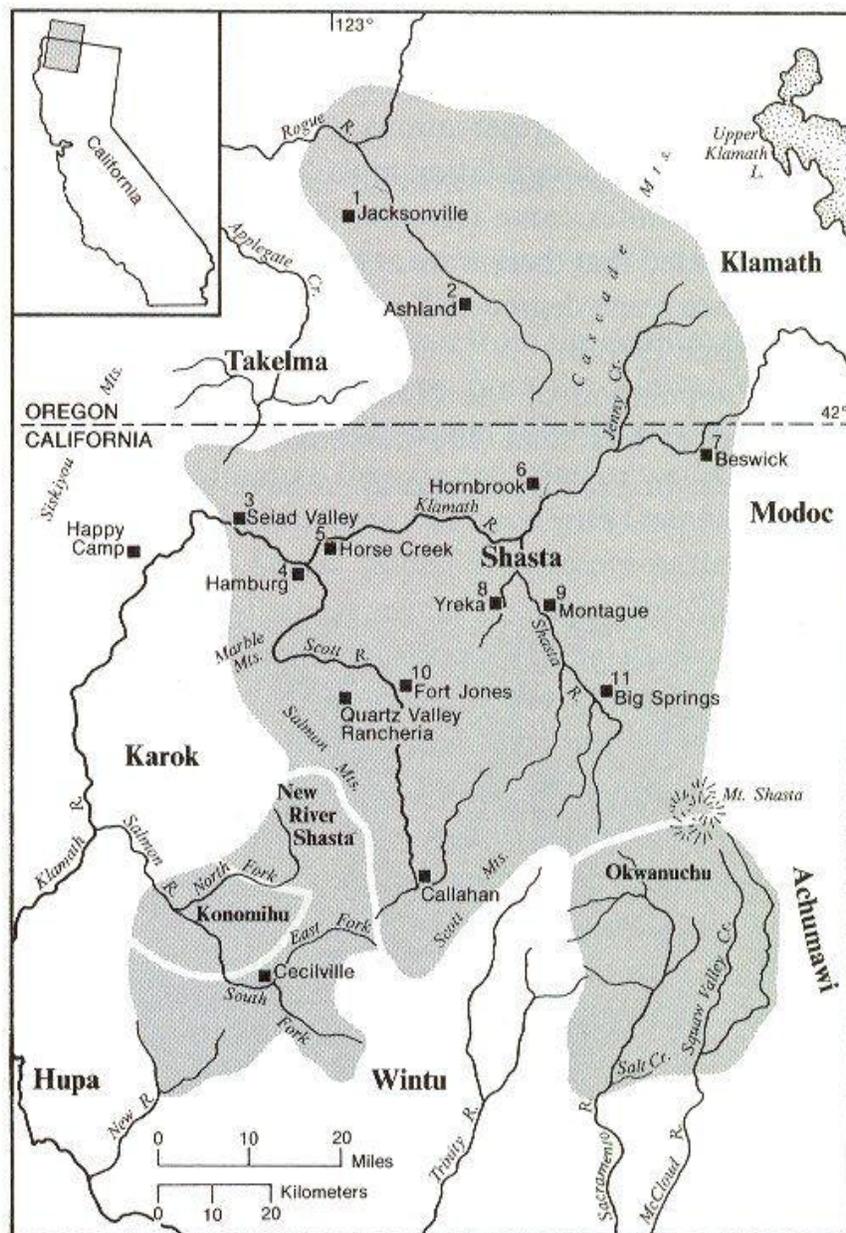


Fig. 1. Tribal territories with a few Shasta place-names: 1, *ikwahawa*; 2, *kwa-xa-xa* 'where the crow lights'; 3, *sam-ay?*; 4, *ayka-* or *ahú'ay* 'down inside'; 5, *itiwákha*; 6, *u-kwa-yi-k*; 7, *če-čutúk*; 8, *kusta*; 9, *čaráywa*; 10, *čunčastúk* or Kwah-pá'-sah-se-rah (Heizer and Hester 1970b).

Place Names

Region Name: Koh hoh sah dee

Little Butte Creek: It sa wah hit ir aga (Shasta-Hokan Language)

## Definitions

**Ecocultural:** Ecocultures or ecocultural communities appreciate the reciprocal relationship between nature and culture, the need for nurturing ecosystem health, recognition of all lifeforms as sentient beings, and the importance of a healthy nature-culture relationship.

Source: [76,77,78,79] *Ecocultural or Biocultural? Towards Appropriate Terminologies in Biocultural Diversity*, <https://doi.org/10.3390%2Fbiology11020207>

**Ecological restoration:** The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.

**Tribal:** of, relating to, or characteristic of a tribe.

### **Indigenous:**

1. produced, growing, living, or occurring natively or naturally in a particular region or environment  
*indigenous plants*  
*the indigenous culture*
2. Indigenous *or less commonly* indigenous: of or relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group  
*Indigenous peoples*

### **Aboriginal:**

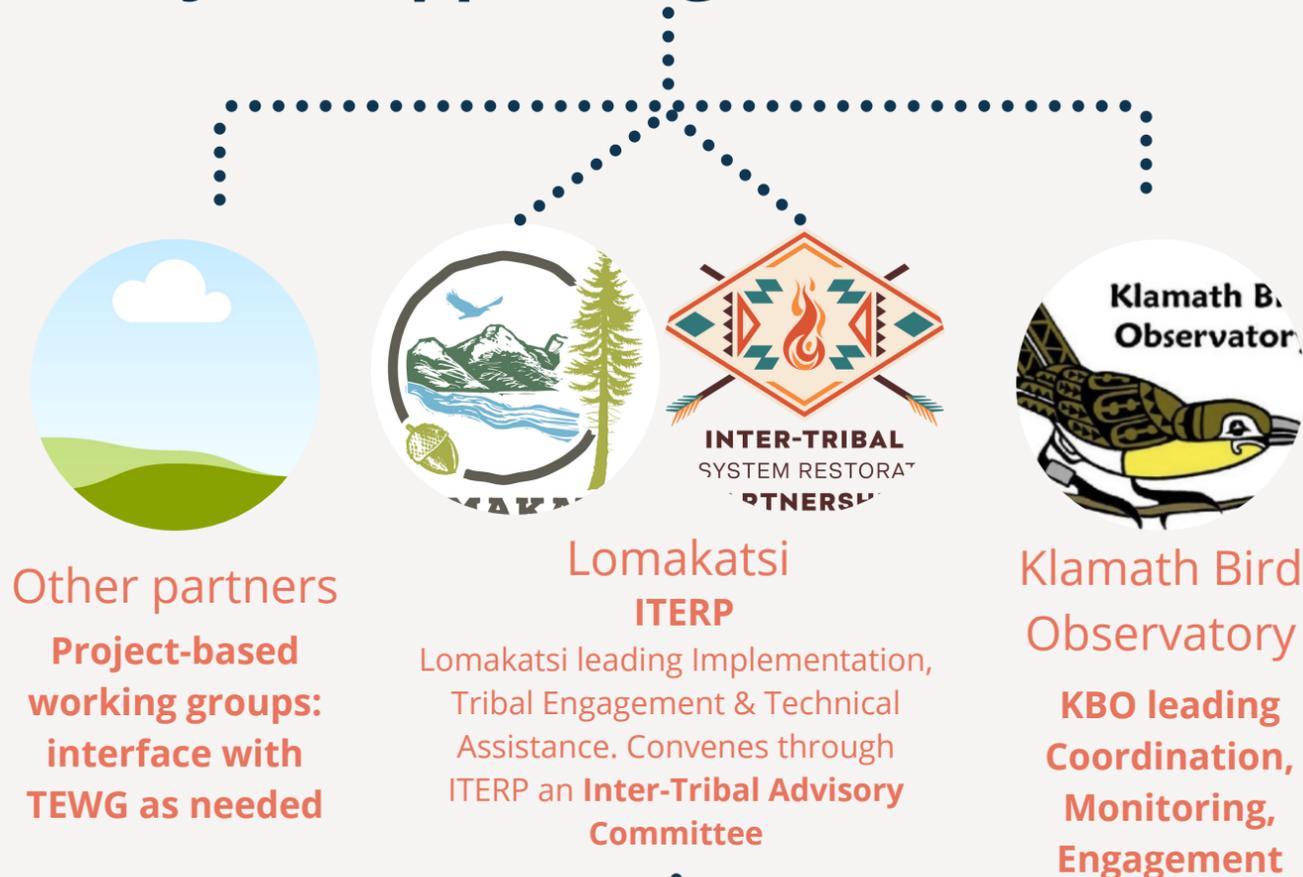
1. being the first or earliest known of its kind present in a region  
*aboriginal forests*  
*aboriginal rocks*
2. of or relating to the people who have been in a region from the earliest time : of or relating to aborigines  
*aboriginal languages*  
*aboriginal tribes/customs/art*

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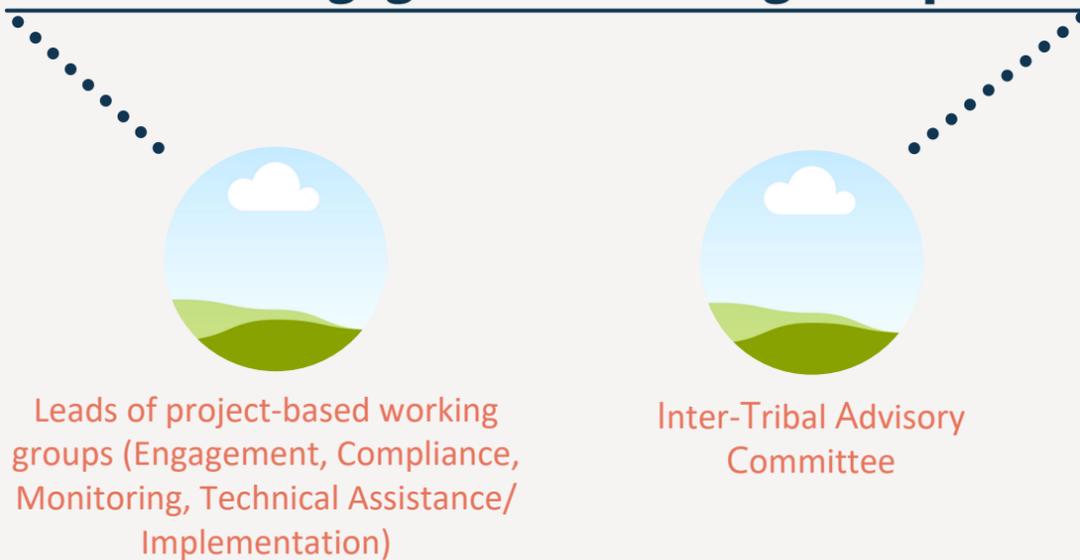
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# Oak Network

## Project: Upper Rogue Oak Initiative



### Tribal Engagement Working Group



**TEWG exists to liaise with Inter-Tribal Advisory Committee to facilitate review of Implementation, Ecological and Cultural Monitoring, Engagement, and represent tribal interests for KSON on a project-by-project basis**

## ITAC



**Inform project actions and integrate into broader KSON efforts and future Initiatives**