

MEMORANDUM

To: Jeremy Pagan, City of Redding

From: Tawaw Architectural Collective and Riverfront Defenders

Date: September 25, 2024

RE: REDDING RIVERFRONT SPECIFIC PLAN: PLACE-BASED HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL NARRATIVE OF THE NORTHERN WINTU PEOPLE

I. INTRODUCTION

In April 2023, the City of Redding began a process to update the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan. The project aims to reimagine and reconnect the city and the community to the river by creating a long-term vision for 380 acres of public and private land and water along the Sacramento River (collectively known as the Redding Riverfront area). The Specific Plan document, which will be developed based on significant community engagement and discussion, will ultimately establish goals, policies, and development standards to guide public and private development, land stewardship and conservation, roadway and infrastructure projects, and other activities within the study area. A community-defined vision and associated guiding principles will frame the Plan. It will also include a series of implementation strategies necessary to transform the community vision for the Riverfront into a reality that appropriately integrates the rich heritage and traditions of the region.

Purpose of the Place-Based Historical and Cultural Narrative

The following memo summarizes Wintu oral history, culture, documented historical events, and records. It is intended to work in parallel with the separate Archeological Resources Review technical study prepared by Basin Research Associates (2024) for the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan project. While that study is focused on an inventory of historical information and their relationship to State and Federal environmental regulations, this memo is intended to expand historical understanding by summarizing Wintu place-based historical and cultural narratives. This memo is organized into the following sections:

- Land Acknowledgement
- Historical Timeline
- Historical Narrative
- Present-day Northern Wintu Groups
- Conclusions – Today and Beyond

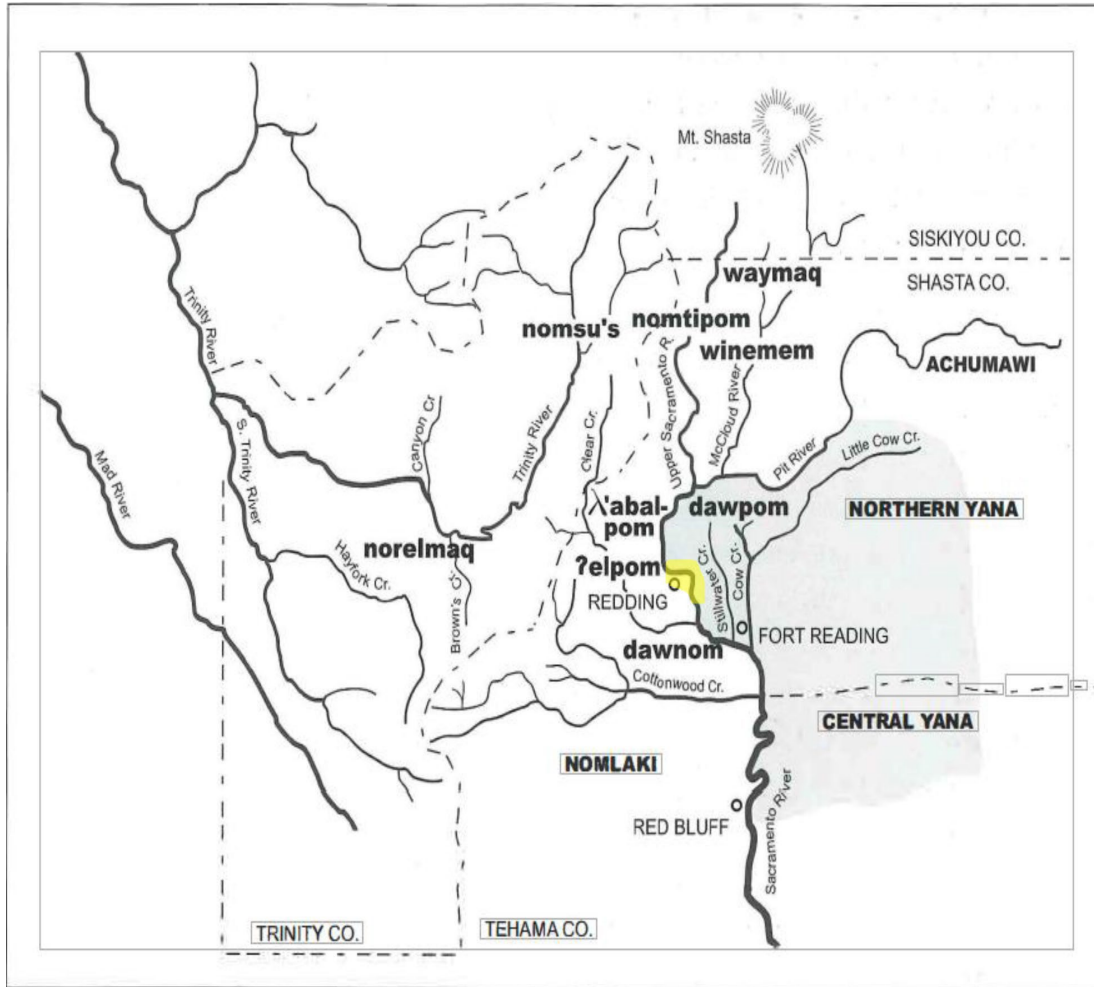
This information is intended to inform the broader community on the history of the Northern Wintu people, create a shared understanding of history, and identify shared values and ways to work together on current planning efforts related to the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan area and broader Redding region.

II. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In accordance with Wintu history and traditional beliefs, the world has been destroyed three times: first by fire; then by wind; and lastly, by flooding. Olelbes (the one who is up above) put animals on the earth first and then created the Wintu (humans). Olelbes put the Wintu here and gave them everything that they needed to exist and survive. The Wintu have orally passed down their traditional knowledge for generations, preserving their unique identity, worldview, and interconnected relationship with the land, water, animals, and plants. This bioregion-based knowledge, shaped by the unique Wintu experience, has sustained their physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being from creation to the present.

At least nine bands of Northern Wintu people have resided within the area of the northern Sacramento River valley and surrounding mountains since time immemorial. Their traditional territory ranges from Cottonwood Creek and the Baldhills area in the south to Mount Shasta in the north, and from areas near Potem Falls in the east to areas around the upper Trinity River and Castle Crags to the west (including the confluence of the Trinity River and South Fork of the Trinity River encompassing Hyampom and Hayfork). The place-specific Northern Wintu bands are identified as Abalpom, Dawnom, Dawpom, Elpom, Nomsus, Nomtipom, Norelmuk, Waymaq, and Winnemem (see Exhibit 1). Many permanent and seasonal village sites with specific place names are in these place-based Wintu band areas. While specific sites may be considered historically and/or culturally significant, it is important to acknowledge that the landscape, writ large, is interconnected and that the “spaces between the spaces” are held as sacred as a system.

Exhibit 1: Wintu Bands Locations¹



As shown in Exhibit 1, the study area for the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan is located in the band areas of Elpom (shore place) on the south side of the Sacramento River and Dawpom (in front place) on the north side of the Sacramento River. The general areas both north and south of the Sacramento River were the sites of several Wintu villages before the Euro-American invasion. Grant Towendolly, (Wintu ancestor who spoke about the south side of the Redding Riverfront area when he shared stories of Wintu history and beliefs recorded in the book “In a Bag of Bones”), told a story about Sedit (Coyote) and Torraharsh (Crane) who traveled south along the west side of the Sacramento River arriving at Naltepuidal (southeast place). His story described the location as a big flat at the northern end of the big valley at present-day Redding. According to the story, there was a big earth lodge and many people at this location (Masson, 1966)².

Despite the Redding Riverfront area’s susceptibility to seasonal flooding, it is historically significant to the Wintu people as the site of a large fish camp and permanent village. The Wintu’s daily lives and activities

¹ This exhibit was produced by the Turtle Bay Exploration Park for a publication by Alice R Hoveman in 2002, with earlier contributions by Frank LaPena (Nomtipom Wintu) and Elaine Sundahl, (LaPena, 1978). The yellow highlighting indicates the approximate location of the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan study area. The grey shading indicates a promised reservation that was outlined within the Cottonwood Creek Treaty of 1851.

² Masson, M., Masson, C. E., & Towendolly, G. (1966). In a Bag of Bones: Legends of the Wintu Indians of Northern California. essay, Naturegraph Publishers. p. 91-102.

extended beyond the north side of the river, including the north/east and south/west regions. During the massive seasonal salmon runs, large numbers of Wintu would join their relatives at this site to harvest fish and partake in social gatherings known as Winyupus (social gatherings contemporarily known as a “big time”).

Many village sites along the north/east side of the Sacramento River, up to the confluence of the McCloud River, are identified in The Occasional Papers of the Redding Museum. However, this is not considered a complete list of the village sites within the Northern Wintu territory nor within the area encompassed in the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan. This is based on the understanding that many other village sites within the Northern Wintu territory existed, including many along the west side of the Sacramento River that are not identified in The Occasional Papers of the Redding Museum. Many of these additional village sites have been recorded both by Western researchers and the Wintu themselves. Some of these villages include locations identified by Grant Towendolly (1966) in the story of Sedit and Torraharsh’s journey south from just west of Mount Shasta down to the present-day Redding area. Sedit and Torraharsh arrive at locations or villages where people gave them directions toward their destination at the present-day Redding Riverfront area. Some of the places/villages are Waytenumal (northwest up), Waytecharrow (north valley), Korsonumwakit (west lung creek, aka Dony Creek), Up-pam-way-yal-kor- ham-mes (north up falling), Up-num-wakit (elderberry west creek, aka Sugar Loaf Creek), Pa-sa-wakit (cliff north creek, aka Backbone Creek), Bar-ras (eating place) and Naltepuidal (southeast place) (Masson, 1966)³.

However, there may never be a complete and accurate record of all the pre-contact village sites that lie within the boundaries of the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan area. This is due to the dispossession and forced displacement of the Wintu by Euro-American occupiers and the enforcement of the unratified Cottonwood Creek Treaty, where the Wintu were forcefully relocated to the north/east side of the river⁴. Other factors also contribute to this issue, including the immense disruption that occurred when vast amounts of aggregate were removed from the Redding Riverfront area to create Shasta Dam.

In addition to this, there were disruptions of the land that occurred during development of the existing structures built in the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan area before the law required archaeological surveys to be conducted to protect culturally sensitive sites. Present-day Wintu maintains that the general Turtle Bay area north and south of the river, and specifically the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan project area, is very culturally sensitive and contains many culturally significant and sensitive sites that are tied to the Wintu’s historical, spiritual, or social practices; places used for religious or ceremonial activities and burials; or landscapes integral to their cultural identity and heritage. It is appropriate to consider their concerns and all the aforementioned information as the Riverfront Specific Plan is developed.

Prior to contact and disruption, the nine bands of Northern Wintu lived off the abundant resources of the land. They had a subsistence economy and resources available varied based on the specific location of their villages. Their staple foods included acorn, fish, large and small game, roots, insects, plants, nuts, fruits, berries, and more. There is also a wide variety of material culture utilized by the Wintu. This includes, but is not limited to, materials such as reeds, grasses, and roots that are used to make baskets for gathering, storing, cooking food, hats, holding babies, and even weaving cords. They also used materials such as wood planks, sticks, and bark for housing, bows, fishing spears, fire, musical

³ See footnote 2. p. 94-96.

⁴ California State University, Monterey Bay (2016). 1851-1852 - Eighteen unratified treaties between California Indians and the United States. Pgs. 24-26. Retrieved October 15, 2023 from: https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=hornbeck_usa_2_b

instruments, and other uses. Different types of rocks were collected for many uses including fishing net weights, cooking stones, good luck charms, tattooing, making arrowheads, and more. Additionally, nearly all parts of anything killed was utilized, from tendons for sinew, bones for whistles and fishing hooks, fur and hides for clothing, feathers for regalia, and so much more.

There were different places and seasons for hunting and gathering food, medicines, and materials. This was done both individually and in groups. Wintu often traveled between village sites seasonally for this purpose, moving between the mountains and the valley. The Wintu held large inter-village/tribal gatherings, ceremonies, and celebrations such as the gatherings historically held at the fish camp in the Redding Riverfront area. There are also places within the Wintu territory that are held sacred to the Wintu,, places that are off limits, and others that hold specific power for healing and other purposes.

According to Wintu oral tradition, the Wintu lived in villages that could have consisted of just a few houses while other larger villages could have had populations up to 500 people or more. The village population was dependent on the number of homes and number of people living in the home, which could vary broadly. It is also important to consider that Wintu families were known to live intergenerationally where there may have been up to three generations of a family living in one home. This would make the number of persons living in one Wintu home much larger (5-10 persons) in comparison to the average American home today (2-6 persons). Based on this information if a village contained 10 homes, the village population could have ranged broadly between 50 to 100 people on average. Another consideration to account for population would be that village populations may have also grown or diminished temporarily depending upon the season. Because of this, it is held by many Wintu that the population of the Northern Wintu was much higher at contact than originally reported in census and other reports.

The Wintu world is centered around the seasons and informed and guided by their spiritual beliefs. And, as previously mentioned in this memo, these beliefs have been transferred intergenerationally since the beginning of time. The Wintu were overseen and guided by highly respected hereditary headmen and traditional spiritual leaders, and the central location of their ancestral homelands put them at the confluence and intersection of the trade routes of the Indigenous peoples of what is now the northern California region. Because of this, Powers (1873) referred to the Wintu as “a sort of metropolitan tribe for the whole of northern California...” (as cited by Theodoratus, 1981, p.64)⁵. Dubois also emphasized that due to the abundance of the resources of their homelands, they were renowned among their neighbors for their generosity, sharing of resources, trading, and hosting large intertribal “big time” gatherings (1935, p.6)⁶. Heizer noted that they had developed a complex and well-used system of trails that connected them with neighboring tribes and formed an intertribal system for trade and cultural exchange (1981, p.65)⁷. According to oral tradition, the Wintu were also known for their skilled craftsmanship of flint work and for being very sociable. And, although the Wintu are more diplomatic and not warlike, their headmen would fight to protect their peoples and territories..

⁵ Theodoratus, D.J., (1981). Native American cultural overview. Shasta -Trinity National Forest, p.64.

⁶ DuBois, C. (1936). Wintu ethnography, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 36 (1); iv-148

⁷ See footnote 2. p.65.

III. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

The following timeline is a summary of major events, activities, and actions that have affected the Wintu people since first Euro-American contact was made in the early 1830s.

- **1830s** – First Euro-American contact with the Northern Wintu is believed to have taken place, which was followed by an outbreak of malaria that decimated whole villages.
- **1840s** – The Wilkes Expedition visited the Redding Riverfront study area.
- **1844** – Pierson B. Reading received a Mexican land grant.
- **1846** – John Fremont, Kit Carson, and militia men engaged in an early morning Wintu massacre.
- **1848** – Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; California becomes a US Territory.
- **1849** – Gold is discovered in California and prospectors/miners flood into Wintu territory.
- **1850** – California becomes a state.
- **1851** – Wintu signs the unratified Cottonwood Creek Treaty under duress.
- **1887** – The US Congress passes the Dawes Act, which resulted in the removal of people from their land, loss of land, and/or break up of communal living areas.
- **1906** – The US Census estimated the Wintu population to be 454, down from over 20,000 (estimated) prior to Euro-American contact (e.g., before the 1830s).
- **1920s through 1930s** – Wintu people are living at Turtle Bay, within the Redding Riverfront study area, as confirmed by local newspaper articles.
- **1922** – The Redding Rancheria is established in Wintu country under the Snyder Act.
- **1924** – The US Congress passes the Indian Citizen Act, making Wintu people US citizens.
- **1928** – The Northern Wintu are listed on the California Indian Judgement roll.
- **1930s** – Most of the surviving Wintu and their descendants remained homeless, and many lived on the allotments of others.
- **1941** – The US Congress enacted “Public Law 198, An Act for The Acquisition of Indian Lands For The Central Valley Project, And Other Purposes” further displacing Wintu people and disrupting Wintu cemeteries.
- **1959** – The Redding Rancheria was terminated under the California Rancheria Termination Act of 1958. Other Wintu are still recognized.
- **1973** – The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) issues an indefinite land use permit for “Toyon” to the Wintu for a reservation.

- **1978** – The BIA undergoes a change in Federal recognition regulations, which would later prove to have very serious consequences on the Northern Wintu.
- **1983** – The Tillie Hardwick case, which challenged the “rancheria termination” process, was settled and Redding Rancheria was restored to Federal recognition status.
- **1986 through 1989** – The BIA revoked use permits and Wintu were forced to leave Toyon.
- **1989** – All Wintu people were vacated from the Toyon property; Toyon infrastructure was torn up and bulldozed. BIA determines that Northern Wintu (majority) are no longer eligible for land. Consequently, the Redding Rancheria (a tribe of Pit River, Wintu, and Yana) became the only Federally recognized tribe within the Northern Wintu homelands.

IV. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The first contact between Euro-Americans and the Northern Wintu is believed to have taken place in the 1830s, which was followed by an outbreak of malaria that decimated whole villages (Cook, 1955, p. 318)⁹. Wintu oral tradition says a local Wintu family adopted the Wilkes name from the Wilkes Expedition¹⁰ that had stopped at the Riverfront/Turtle Bay area in the 1840s. Many of these Native Americans were born and died at Turtle Bay (See appendix 1), and many descendants of this family still live in the area and continue to carry the Wilkes name.

According to Hoveman (2002), in 1844, Pierson B. Reading received a Mexican land grant and established Rancho Bueno Ventura, which initiated the first Euro-American settlement of the area (p.24)¹¹. Hoover et al., explained that the land grant encompassed a 19-mile stretch along the west side of the Sacramento River from Cottonwood Creek on the south to Salt Creek in the north and extend three miles west from the river for the length of the grant (1966)¹². The grant encompassed the present-day towns of Redding, Anderson, and Cottonwood within the Dawnom and Elpom Wintu territories.

In his book “American Genocide,” Benjamin Madley (2016) recounts an attack on a group of Wintu people fishing on the Sacramento River. The attack took place near Reading’s Rancho in the spring of 1846. Madley recounts the early morning surprise assault conducted by John Fremont, Kit Carson, and militia men. They encircled the Wintu group, killing nearly a thousand men, women, and children. Madley goes on to say that this could possibly be the largest unknown massacre of Native Americans in American history (pgs. 64-66)¹³. Soon after this event, gold was discovered within the Northern Wintu territory and according to Hoveman (2002), “gold hungry 49ers’ began to flood into the Northern Wintu homelands (p.25)¹⁴, inflicting brutality untold on the Northern Wintu people.”

⁹ Cook, S.F., (1955). *The Epidemic of 1830-1833 in California and Oregon*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

¹⁰ Wilkes Expedition, available at: <https://timeandnavigation.si.edu/navigating-at-sea/us-goes-to-sea/wilkes-expedition>.

¹¹ Hoveman, A.R., (2002) *Journey to Justice: The Wintu people and the Salmon*, Exhibition catalog Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Redding, CA.

¹² Hoover, Mildred B.; Rensch, Hero; Rensch, Ethel; Abeloe, William N. (1966). *Historic Spots in California*. Stanford University Press. pp. 467–468. ISBN 978-0-8047-4482-9. Retrieved: October 10, 2023 from: https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Rancho_Buena_Ventura

¹³ Madley, B. (2016). *An American genocide: The United States and the California Indian catastrophe, 1846-1873*. Yale University Press.

¹⁴ Hoveman, A.R., (2002). *Journey to Justice: The Wintu people and the Salmon*, Exhibition catalog Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Redding, CA.

Shortly thereafter, California became a state in 1850 and enacted laws that further dehumanized and displaced the Northern Wintu. They were left without rights and vulnerable to outright genocidal rampages of State-sanctioned militias and vigilantes. On August 16, 1851, a treaty was signed at Reading's Rancho between Wintu, other tribal leaders, and US government agents¹⁵. Today, this treaty is commonly known as the Cottonwood Creek Treaty. While the Northern Wintu complied with the treaty terms to move to the promised 35-square-mile reservation, the treaty was never ratified, which further exposed them to atrocities.

When the Dawes Act was passed in 1887, many Northern Wintu received allotments but refused to relinquish their communal way of living, which also left them vulnerable to the stipulations within the Dawes Act meant to assimilate indigenous people into "civilized" Americans. As a result, within a few short years from the establishment of California as a state, the once thriving and vibrant Northern Wintu people had nearly been driven to the brink of extinction. As described in the 2019 Apology to Native Americans for State's Historical Wrongdoing, "the relationship between the State of California and California Native Americans was fraught with violence, exploitation, dispossession, and the attempted destruction of tribal communities."¹⁶ Their population of nearly 20,000 at the beginning of the gold rush dwindled to just 454 by the time of the 1906 US census (Kelsey, 1971, p.100)¹⁷.

Around the turn of the century, many Wintu and people from other tribes lived at Turtle Bay near the site of the lumber mill, which once stood in the general vicinity where Turtle Bay Museum, the Sheraton Hotel, and Monolith stand today. Many local newspaper articles written between the early 1900s into the 1930s confirm this. The articles mention a wide variety of events and happenings at the site on the south side of the river within what is now the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan area. Many of the articles highlight events such as political and social gatherings of the Wintu and other Native Americans, the kidnapping of an "Indian" child by local authorities and documenting the deaths of Wintu people and other Native Americans at the site.

In 1922, Redding Rancheria was established in Wintu country under the Snyder Act as a reservation for "homeless" Native Americans (2002, p.57)¹⁸. Some Northern Wintu individuals went to live on the Rancheria along with others from the Pit River and Yana peoples. The Indian Citizen Act was passed in 1924 and the Northern Wintu became United States citizens, whether they wanted to or not¹⁹. In 1928, many Northern Wintu were listed on the California Indian Judgement roll and eligible to file suit against the US for lands taken from them. By the 1930s, most of the surviving Wintu and their descendants remained homeless, and many lived on the allotments of others.

On July 30, 1941, the United States Congress enacted "Public Law 198, An Act for The Acquisition of Indian Lands for The Central Valley Project, And Other Purposes"²⁰. This Act called for the removal of the Northern Wintu from their allotments to make way for the Shasta Dam and the impending flooding of ancestral lands as the lake level rose. The Act

¹⁵ California State University, Monterey Bay (2016). 1851-1852 - Eighteen unratified treaties between California Indians and the United States. Pgs. 24-26. Retrieved October 15, 2023 from:

https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=hornbeck_usa_2_b

¹⁶ Exec. Order No. N-15-19 (2019). <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/6.18.19-Executive-Order.pdf> (accessed 6.11.2024)

¹⁷ Kelsey, C.E., (1971). Census of Non-Reservation California Indians, 1905-1906. Berkeley, CA: Archaeological Research Facility, Department of Anthropology, University of California.

¹⁸ Hoveman, A.R., (2002). Journey to Justice: The Wintu people and the Salmon, Exhibition catalog Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Redding, CA.

¹⁹ The Library of Congress (2023). Today in History - June 2. Retrieved October 10, 2023 from: <https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/june-02/>

²⁰ Library of Congress. (2023). Acquisition of Indian lands for the Central Valley Project. Retrieved October 12, 2023 from: https://www.loc.gov/resource/llsalvol.llsal_055/?sp=637&st=text&r=0.131,0.262,0.905,0.881,0

stipulated that the allotments were to be purchased and that like land was to be provided elsewhere and put into trust once again under the oversight of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Act required the disinterment and relocation of Wintu cemeteries.

A countless number of graves and sacred sites were inundated by the flood waters that would become Shasta Lake and many Wintu cemeteries and Wintu relatives were relocated. Additionally, according to a report submitted by the Winnemem Wintu to the United Nations, the government had acquired at least 72 allotments and only paid for 28 of them; therefore, never honoring its promise as stipulated in the Act to justly compensate the Wintu for all land that was acquired (2013, p.3)²¹. The Redding Rancheria was terminated in 1959 under the California Rancheria Termination Act of 1958²², which left the small number of Northern Wintu and other Native Americans who had been living on the Rancheria without Federal recognition. However, the rest of the Northern Wintu were still considered Indian by the Federal government. This is proven in the fact that the BIA issued an indefinite land use permit in 1973 for “Toyon” to the Wintu for a reservation (2002, p.66)²³. In 1978, the BIA underwent a change in Federal recognition regulations, which would later prove to have negative consequences on the Northern Wintu.

In 1983, the “Tillie Hardwick”²⁴ case, which challenged the “rancheria termination,” was settled, and according to the Constitution of the Redding Rancheria (1989), the Redding Rancheria was restored to Federal recognition status (as cited, National Indian Law Library)²⁵. Meanwhile, due to building deterioration and what the government deemed unlivable housing, the BIA revoked the land use permit from the Wintu at Toyon. Then the Northern Wintu were left off or removed from the list of Federally recognized tribes despite the well-documented and recorded historic government-to- government relationship between the Northern Wintu and the US government. They were told that to live on the land at Toyon, they would have to petition for recognition. They were in a Catch-22: without the land required to be Federally recognized and no longer on the list of Federally recognized Tribes eligible to receive land.

The Redding Rancheria Constitution (1989) was adopted in 1989 and stipulates that members must be direct lineal descendants of the original “seventeen” persons who had received land distributions when the Rancheria had been terminated in 1958 (as cited, National Indian Law Library)²⁶. In 1986, although not all agreed, Northern Wintu leaders at Toyon signed an agreement to peacefully vacate the land and agreed to seek Federal recognition. In return, the government would hold the land in trust for them until they “acquired” Federal recognition status. Once again, Northern Wintu leaders found themselves placed in a difficult and perhaps untenable position by the BIA.

By 1989, all the people had been vacated from the Toyon property, and shortly thereafter, every piece of infrastructure, including power lines, sewer lines, houses, and their foundations, were torn up or bulldozed. With the exception of a few buildings and roads, anything that the Northern Wintu could eventually try to rebuild with had been destroyed. What began as a supposed issue of structural

²¹ Winnemem Wintu. (2013, June). Shadow report. Periodic Report to the United Nations. Retrieved October 16, 2023 from: <http://www.winnememwintu.us/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Winnemem-Wintu-shadow-report-FINAL-2-copy.pdf>

²² 72 stat.] public law 85-671-AUG. 18, 1958 619 - govinfo. Available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-72/pdf/STATUTE-72-Pg619.pdf>

²³ Hoveman, A.R., (2002). Journey to Justice: The Wintu people and the Salmon, Exhibition catalog Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Redding, CA.

²⁴ Tillie Hardwick (2023) Wikipedia. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tillie_Hardwick

²⁵ National Indian Law Library (n.d.) Constitution of the Redding Rancheria. Available at: <https://narf.org/nill/constitutions/redding/reddconstitution.html>

²⁶ National Indian Law Library (n.d.) Constitution of the Redding Rancheria. Available at: <https://narf.org/nill/constitutions/redding/reddconstitution.html> .

disrepair of buildings on the Toyon site quickly became a question of whether the Northern Wintu (majority) were even Native Americans eligible for land. It is important to consider that a Tribe can only lose Federal recognition status if Congress explicitly terminates the Tribe. This outcome was a determination made by the BIA and not an Act of Congress.

Consequently, Redding Rancheria (Tribe of Pit River, Wintu, and Yana) is now the only Federally recognized Tribe in the Northern Wintu homelands. According to Hoveman (2002), the majority of the Northern Wintu were ineligible for enrollment in Redding Rancheria and without Federal recognition (p.69)²⁷. The Northern Wintu enrolled at Redding Rancheria who are eligible for enrollment as descendants of the original Wintu distributees represent a small minority of the overall Northern Wintu population.

Yet, the US government had historically and consistently acknowledged the Northern Wintu as Native Americans. The government had given them allotments, created a rancheria in Northern Wintu territory, acknowledged them in a Congressional Act, and also financially compensated militias to handle the “Indian problem”, which often included the loss of Wintu lives. Wintu children were taken to boarding schools. An Indian boarding school is an educational institution established in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the United States with the primary aim of assimilating Native American children into Euro-American culture. These schools were often government-run or operated by religious organizations and were part of a broader policy of forced assimilation. The key characteristics and objectives of Indian boarding schools include forced enrollment, cultural erasure, and military-style discipline. Government agents negotiated a treaty (unratified) with the Wintu and the Wintu were also issued a land use agreement at Toyon. Additionally, many Northern Wintu were listed on the California Judgment rolls and given educational scholarships and access to Indian health services as well as other Federal Indian programs. Many received land claims settlement checks and even received certified degrees of Native American blood.

It is important to note that Federally recognized Tribes are afforded the right to the Federal Indian trust relationship with the United States government. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs website (2023)²⁸:

The Federal Indian trust responsibility is a legal obligation under which the United States “has charged itself with moral obligations of the highest responsibility and trust” toward Indian tribes (Seminole Nation v. United States, 1942). This obligation was first discussed by Chief Justice John Marshall in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831). Over the years, the trust doctrine has been at the center of numerous other Supreme Court cases, thus making it one of the most important principles in Federal Indian law.

The Federal Indian trust responsibility is also a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources, as well as a duty to carry out the mandates of Federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages. Therefore, Federally recognized Indian Tribes have unique status within the United States with a unique government-to-government relationship between themselves and the Federal government. This government-to-government relationship gives Federally recognized tribes the right to self-govern and determine what is best for their people and ensure the tribe’s wellbeing and continued existence. They are afforded the rights to self-determine and govern as a tribe and are eligible for Federal funds to self-

²⁷ Hoveman, A.R., (2002) Journey to Justice: The Wintu people and the Salmon, Exhibition catalog Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Redding, CA.

²⁸ US Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (2023). What is the federal trust responsibility? Retrieved October 16, 2023 from <https://www.bia.gov/faqs/what-federal-indian-trust-responsibility>

govern and implement tribal programs. Some Federal opportunities afforded Federally recognized tribes include, but are not limited to, governance and administrative support, trust land, gaming, funding for social and community services, Indian child welfare programs, housing, economic development, health and education, environmental and natural resources protection, transportation, workforce development, law enforcement, and tribal court systems. They are also recognized as the legitimate Tribal representatives to engage with local governments, organizations, and Federal agencies.

According to Pevar (2012), “Federal Indian Law is unique, encompassing concepts and rules that often are unexpected and bewildering to those unfamiliar with it. Indians and Tribes have a difficulty defending their rights and as a result, have lost some of them... (p. xiii)”²⁹. Such is the case for the majority of the Northern Wintu who have found themselves living under the Federal status of non-recognized Indians today, despite many holding certified degrees of Indian (Wintu) blood issued from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and without Congressional termination. While many Northern Wintu still practice their culture and traditional ceremonies, many struggle to do so, and some have lost their connection to their identity and tribal community altogether and have been swept away into dominant American society.

²⁹ Pevar, S.L. (2012). *The Rights of Indians and Tribes*. Oxford University Press.

V. PRESENT-DAY NORTHERN WINTU GROUPS

The historical events summarized in this memorandum have left an identifiable wake of destruction and loss on the traditional bands of Northern Wintu. Although they are one people, they have been systematically splintered into several distinct groups by various policies and acts by both the US government and the State of California via the State of California Native American Heritage Commission. Presently, the descendants of the original Northern Wintu bands are represented within the following groups:

Norelmuk Wintu Nation

- History: This Nation was previously part of the recognized Northern Wintu but is currently not on the list of Federally recognized Tribes. They are listed on the California Native Heritage Commission list of California Tribes as a Wintu (Northern Wintu)-affiliated Tribe. The Traditional Wintu Band membership consists of descendants of the original bands of Northern Wintu Nor El Muk band.
- Current Status: Seeking Federal recognition through Congress.
- Address: 304 Corral Bottom Road, Big Bar, CA 96010
- Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1967 Weaverville, CA 96093
- Email: NRMWintu@gmail.com

Redding Rancheria

- Current Status: Federally recognized Indian Tribe.
- Membership: Membership consists of descendants of 17 original distributees (Northern Wintu [from Northern Wintu bands possibly Winnemem and Nor El Muk], Pit River, and Yana).
- Changes to Status: Created 1922, terminated 1959, and reinstated 1983
- Address: 2000 Redding Rancheria Road Redding, CA 96001
- Phone: (530) 225-8979
- Website: www.reddingrancheria-nsn.gov

Winnemem Wintu Tribe (Middle Water people “McCloud River”)

- History: Previously part of recognized Wintu, currently not on the list of Federally recognized Tribes Listed on the California Native American Heritage Commission list of California Tribes as a Wintu (Northern Wintu)- affiliated Tribe.
- Membership: Winnemem Wintu is a traditional Northern Wintu Band. This Winnemem Wintu group consists of a percentage of the overall “Winnemem” Northern Wintu population.
- Current Status: Not seeking new Federal recognition but restoration of original Federal recognition.
- Address: 14840 Bear Mountain Rd, Redding, CA 96003
- Phone: (530) 229-4096
- Website: www.winnememwintu.us

Wintu Tribe of Northern California

- History: Previously part of recognized Wintu, currently not listed as a Federally recognized Tribe. Listed on the California Native American Heritage Commission list of California Tribes as a Wintu (Northern Wintu)- affiliated Tribe. Currently, operating the Toyon Wintu Center.

- Membership: Membership eligibility consists of persons from all the nine traditional Northern Wintu bands.
- Current Status: Seeking Federal recognition through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Federal recognition petition process.
- Address: 4755 Shasta Dam Blvd, Shasta Lake CA 96019
- Phone: (530) 605-1726
- Email: wintu.tribe1@gmail.com
- Website: wintutribe.com

Unaffiliated (Northern Wintu People)

While the percentage cannot be accurately determined, there is a large population of Northern Wintu people who are not affiliated with any of the present-day Northern Wintu groups for possible reasons of displacement and removal, ineligibility for enrollment, noninterest, disconnection, displacement, or enrollment with another tribe.

Language

- Wintu language: Penutian language family

Surrounding Tribal Groups

- North: Shasta
- North (eastern): Okwanuchu
- Western (northern): Chimariko
- Western (southern): Nongatl, Lassik
- South (western): Yuki
- South: Nomlaki (Central Wintun; within context of this research, Nomlaki is not part of the Northern Wintu group)
- East (southern): Yana
- East (northern): Achumawi (Pit River)

VI. CONCLUSIONS – TODAY AND BEYOND

While the Wintu have faced genocide, dispossession, displacement, cultural erasure, and near extinction, they are a resilient people who continue to remember their origin and connection to the place where Olelbes placed them. Today, many Wintu maintain a traditional Wintu worldview and traditional knowledge that has been passed down intergenerationally since time immemorial. They remember sacred places, ceremonies, songs, protocols, and language; and times and locations for hunting, fishing, and gathering of different types of medicines, materials, and foods. They also remember their responsibility to steward and maintain a reciprocal relationship with the land that has always sustained them and continues to inform their identity and wellbeing today.

Due to dispossession and displacement from their ancestral home for Euro-American settlement, many Wintu do not own land in their ancestral homeland or have access to the land to hunt, fish, gather, or freely and privately express their Wintu culture. In addition, due to the creation of Shasta Dam, many Wintu living today have not seen the rivers and creeks above the dam run full of salmon, nor have they been able to access the sacred sites and cemeteries inundated by the waters of Shasta Lake. They also do not have access to many other spaces within their ancestral homeland due to occupation of their land and enforcement of foreign land ownership and individualism concepts. However, many Wintu still live within and call the greater Wintu territory home. This includes many Wintu who live in the City of Redding, which was established in Dawnom, Abalpom, Dawpom, and Elpom Wintu territories.

The Redding Riverfront area contains key open space areas that remain publicly accessible. This area is a source of significant cultural connection to the land for many Wintu people. Many Wintu living today maintain intergenerational knowledge of the Redding Riverfront area as a very culturally sensitive location, being the home to many ancestral village sites and of many Wintu relatives and ancestors, including the animals, plants, and waters. They also know it as a place where many of their displaced Wintu relatives gathered. As a result, many Wintu living today have personal knowledge of their direct relatives while others have direct connection to the location through personal familial history.

Today, Wintu see the Redding Riverfront area as a place to find solace and peace, to be on the land, and to make that much-needed reciprocal ancestral connection to the land they have been displaced from. Many Wintu and other Native people come to this area to gather materials, medicines, and food; and to see wildlife or just enjoy nature. Some of the specific foods and materials that are still gathered here are Grey Pine, mugwort, blackberry, elderberry, willow, yerba santa, manzanita berries, wild grapes, and acorns.

The Redding Riverfront area continues to be a very culturally sacred and significant area to the Wintu people. Their origin and ancestral genealogy tie them directly to the land. They have both a historic and continued living cultural connection to the land in this area. In accordance with the Wintu worldview and beliefs, their continued connection, stewardship, and reciprocal relationship to their homelands is necessary for their continued existence and wellbeing as Wintu people.

Many Wintu activities and ceremonies take place in the Redding Riverfront area. A group of Native people typically gather in the area every Monday night to walk or run together. In addition, members of the Wintu community host an annual sunrise ceremonial gathering in the Redding Riverfront area on Thanksgiving morning in remembrance of the ancestors of the land who endured so much. It is also the site of a gathering to memorialize the signing of the 1851 unratified Cottonwood Creek Treaty.

The Wintu people are the first people and inherent stewards of the land within the Redding Riverfront area. Their continued cultural wellbeing and existence is interwoven within an ancestral and continued reciprocal relationship with this land. Historic atrocities were committed that dispossessed and displaced them from the land as a means of American settlement and establishment of the City of Redding. In consideration of these facts, the inclusion of the Wintu voice in the preservation, planning and and/or management process of their ancestral home, is imperative.

As the Redding Riverfront Specific Plan process moves forward, it is crucial to maintain ongoing discussions and communication between Wintu Tribes, the City of Redding, and the broader community regarding the future importance of the Redding Riverfront area. For context, it is important to acknowledge that the Riverfront area has been, and will continue to be, a culturally significant gathering place for Wintu people, as well as members of other local Tribes. Guiding principles, developed collaboratively, will ensure that the planning process respects and honors the cultural heritage of the Wintu while also supporting the needs and aspirations of the broader community. These principles will help create a balanced approach that fosters mutual respect, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development, benefiting the Wintu Tribal community and the wider public.