

*Round Valley Indian Tribes
Integrated Resource Management Plan*



*Report on the
Tribal Community Focus Groups*

Prepared for the Round Valley Indian Tribes by
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Introduction

A series of seven focus groups were conducted during the winter of 2007/2008 in support of the Round Valley Indian Tribes' Integrated Resource Management Plan community outreach effort. The focus groups addressed a number of planning issues affecting natural and cultural resources and the well being of the tribal community. The focus groups included:

- ✚ Youth
- ✚ Healthcare
- ✚ Economic Development
- ✚ Tribal Council
- ✚ Housing
- ✚ Elders
- ✚ Cultural Resources

In order to facilitate discussion, the groups were limited in size, typically to seven or fewer participants. Tribal members with interest in the topic area or who are serving in a relevant tribal organization were chosen for the groups.

The information and insight gained from the focus groups along with the results of the *2007 Tribal Community Survey* will provide the IRMP team with guidance and priorities in developing the IRMP management goals and objectives.

The focus groups were conducted by Paul Mills of the Center for Applied Research. The Round Valley Indian Health Center generously provided conference room facilities for most of the group discussions. The Round Valley High School administration graciously coordinated the Youth focus group. Thanks go to the Round Valley Indian Housing Authority for providing meeting facilities for the Housing focus group.

Special thanks are due to the Tribal Council for supporting the planning endeavor and to all the focus group participants whose thoughtful contributions to the discussion of planning issues will help to ensure the success of this planning effort.

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Youth Focus Group

The Youth focus group was conducted at the Round Valley High School on November 7, 2007. Seven students were chosen as a representative sample of the tribal high school student population.

The students responded to a series of questions about the quality of life in Round Valley, lifestyle and cultural issues, and expressed their career goals.

Quality of Life

When asked what they considered the best things about living in Round Valley, the students cited:

- A healthy environment
- Being surrounded by family and friends
- The valley's rural setting: hills, rivers, creeks and wildlife
- The peace and quiet
- The small town setting and low population density

When asked what they considered the worst things about living in Round Valley, the students cited:

- Not enough retail businesses, especially food and clothing stores and gas stations
- The lack of privacy and anonymity
- The lack of after school and weekend youth activities

Strategies cited by the students to improve life in Round Valley included:

- Economic development providing more retail businesses and jobs
- After school and weekend activities with a community/recreation center
- Entertainment such as a theater, radio station and arcade
- Protecting the environment from litter and pollution

Lifestyle and Culture

Recognizing the fact that increased economic development would likely involve an increase in population and the resulting environmental impacts of traffic and pollution caused some concern about potentially losing the rural nature of the valley.

When asked if they could identify tribal lands versus private lands, they indicated that it was easier in the hills where there are a lot of signs designating tribal and private lands. All the students have gathered firewood in the woodland areas of the reservation and some have worked on tribal projects such as the Natural Resource Department's tree planting programs.

The students expressed a strong interest in traditional tribal practices such as basket weaving, beading, making wreaths, dream-catchers, regalia and moccasins. They all said they enjoyed attending and participating in tribal ceremonies. Most of the students also enjoy creative writing and art.

They all stated a desire to learn their native languages. About half of the students said they knew some words in a native language. They stated that they felt that native culture had been "washed away" and that learning their native language would help bring it back.

Career Goals

Almost all of the students expressed a desire to go to college. The careers they hoped to pursue included:

- Working with children
- Counseling troubled youth
- Nursing
- Massage therapy/herbology/nutrition
- Pro sports

Although a couple of the students expressed a desire to move out of the valley, most of them expressed a desire to live and work in Round Valley. Significantly, most of the career aspirations involve working to improve the lives and health of their community.

Healthcare Focus Group

The Healthcare focus group was conducted at the Round Valley Indian Health Center (RVIHC) on November 14, 2007. The group consisted of members of the RVIHC Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the RVIHC.

The topics of the group discussion covered an assessment of healthcare facility and service needs affecting the ability of the RVIHC to provide quality healthcare to the tribal community in the future. The group also addressed environmental factors potentially affecting the health of tribal members living on the reservation.

Healthcare Facilities

The RVIHC facilities are currently operating at capacity and the administrative offices are old and deteriorating. The RVIHC management and the Board of Directors are exploring development strategies for facilities expansion and funding. The currently preferred strategy is to obtain block grant funding to build a new and larger health care facility and to move the administrative offices into the existing building allowing the removal of the deteriorating administrative offices.

A convalescent center for tribal members recuperating from surgery is desired by many community members. Currently, tribal members are required to stay at convalescent centers outside the valley, typically as far away as Ukiah or further. It is difficult for family members to attend to convalescing relatives, especially when transportation out of the valley is unavailable.

Whereas an expanded healthcare facility would likely be cost effective due to the existing demand for a variety of services, a convalescent center may be difficult to justify based on the relatively small number of patients requiring care at any given time and the cost of full time staffing and facility maintenance.

Healthcare Services

The group discussed the variety of services currently provided by the RVIHC and other services that are desired by tribal members. Of particular concern is treatment of diabetes-related health problems including dialysis and podiatry that affect many tribal members. As with convalescent care, the cost effectiveness of providing the equipment, medical expertise and space for the average number of patients in need of this capability is difficult to achieve.

Pre-natal care was also mentioned as a desired healthcare service. Once again, the distance and transportation difficulties out of the valley to access pre-natal care services drives the desire for this capability. The focus group noted that the Mendocino Transportation Authority at one time provided a shuttle service into and out of Round Valley but the program was discontinued due to low ridership.

The focus group participants consider substance abuse on the reservation to be a problem of “epidemic proportions.” Although funding for a substance abuse center has not been obtained, the Tribes have established the Yuki Trails program that addresses substance abuse for teenage boys. The Hoopa Valley Tribe manages the Willow Lodge program for teenage females. These programs provide services to assist youths in transitioning back into their community as they continue on their path to sobriety. The youths are offered mental health therapy, chemical dependency counseling, cultural groups, recreation, and aftercare planning.

Environmental Concerns

The group expressed concern that there seems to be a high incident rate of cancer among reservation residents. Health care staff and tribal members have voiced concerns that people working at the Louisiana Pacific Mill may have been exposed to carcinogens resulting in an increase in cancer diagnoses. Others have expressed concerns that mill waste disposal sites along Short Creek were not remediated when the mill site was dismantled and cleaned up after closure.

The RVIHC has investigated the feasibility of conducting a study of medical records to learn what types of cancer have been diagnosed and the relationship to lumber mill employment. In addition, testing ground water for the presence of carcinogens would help determine whether mill site waste disposal areas are contaminating the domestic water supply.

These studies require financing that is currently not available and may require litigation to resolve. The RVIHC is investigating funding sources and expertise to begin a study of cancer incidents. The group also noted that some tribal members were diagnosed with cancer in the years before the mill was in operation so the study would need to determine if the cancer incidents were a result of genetic proclivity or environmental exposure.

Economic Development Focus Group

The Economic Development focus group was conducted at the Round Valley Indian Health Center (RVIHC) on November 14, 2007. The group consisted primarily of members of the Economic Development Board of Directors and the Economic Development Business Manager.

Economic Development Planning

The group noted that the Tribes do not have a current long-range economic development plan. The Overall Economic Development Plan of 1998 has not been updated and does not reflect current opportunities and constraints.

Pursuing business opportunities requires an overall economic development plan and specific business plans for the high priority business opportunities. In addition, financial commitment and a business entity are necessary to move forward on projects. The group expressed frustration that obvious opportunities such as a laundromat are discussed for years until non-tribal entrepreneurs step in and take advantage of the business opportunity. Apparently, private entrepreneurs are already moving ahead on a laundromat and possibly a bottled water plant.

Business enterprises will require a pool of skilled employees and some group members expressed concern that it is difficult to find motivated workers currently living on the reservation. Others noted that employment opportunities at the new casino received an enthusiastic response and the employees there have shown the necessary motivation and work ethics.

Attracting skilled workers who currently live outside the valley will require housing. Providing inexpensive housing on the reservation would provide an attractive benefit that would appeal to tribal members who would like to live and work on the reservation.

Enterprise Corporation

Currently, business development activities are managed by the Tribal Council. The group noted that governments typically operate more in the style of non-profit organizations whereas profit making is typically the foremost goal of an enterprise corporation. Additionally, investors are usually reluctant to invest in business ventures sponsored by tribal governments, as they have no legal recourse if there is a dispute.

Although the Tribes initiated an enterprise corporation, Tribal Councils in the past have not provided the initial financing necessary to begin any business ventures. Given the limited financial resources of the tribal government, there is great concern that funds are not subject to mismanagement and that business ventures contribute to the operating expenses of the tribal government.

As a government, the Tribal Council has the authority to tax business activities on the reservation. Even a tribally funded corporation could be required to pay business taxes to the tribal government, providing additional operating revenue. Additionally, a corporation assumes liability for its actions, thereby protecting the shareholders (i.e. the tribal government and tribal community) from legal action.

Corporations can be chartered by the Tribal Council, the State of California or the federal government (via Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act). The group discussed the various advantages of each of these. A state chartered corporation can be established quickly and would be attractive to investors, but must pay taxes to the state government. A tribally chartered corporation would pay taxes to the tribal government but would not be attractive to investors. A federally chartered corporation would be exempt from federal taxes and would also be attractive to investors, but takes several months to establish. In addition, the tribal government could feasibly have more than one corporation should that prove to be an effective economic development strategy.

Business Opportunities

The group discussed the pros and cons of various business activities including those presented to the tribal community in the *2007 Tribal Community Survey*.

Agriculture - There is very little agricultural activity on the reservation although alfalfa and oats have been grown in the past. There is plenty of tribal and allotment land available, possibly thousands of acres that could be used although they are scattered throughout the valley. The group felt it would be necessary to identify appropriate markets. Biomass fuel and hemp production are two promising ideas that the group has discussed.

Wood Products - There is currently no facility to process wood products although the Tribes have commercial timber stands and woodland trees. The group expressed concern that there may be too much competition and that transportation costs are an important factor. It was noted that Mendocino County restricts the use of wood burning stoves and fireplaces but that wood pellet stoves are approved. A wood pellet business could have a sizeable local market.

Aggregate Mining - Once again, transportation costs are a concern to the group, although it was noted that the demand for aggregate is great and will continue to be so and an aggregate mining business should ultimately be profitable.

Bottled Water - The group acknowledged that this is a popular idea among tribal members, but that the market is saturated. Further, a local, non-tribal business may be pursuing this idea already.

Vineyards - The group noted that this opportunity is not very popular with the tribal community and that the market for wine grapes is also saturated. A possible alternative would be niche wines such as elderberry or perhaps non-alcoholic juices.

Gas Station and Convenience Store - These are both strongly endorsed by the community and the Tribes have obtained funding to move forward on them.

Tourism - Development of a destination resort holds a lot of promise for economic development. The casino, gas station and convenience store will be important components of this effort. In addition, upgrading the Hidden Oaks park to accommodate RVs and camping will allow visitors to stay longer. The nearby rodeo grounds could also be used for sponsored events such as a kid's rodeo. Ultimately, a motel or hotel would provide much needed overnight accommodations. Hiking trails and nature walks could provide additional attractions for tourists.

The McKay Ranch that was recently purchased by the Tribes has a 3-bedroom house with a large deck, two-car garage, and tennis court. A business plan is needed to determine the most cost effective use of this facility whether it is used as a vacation rental, children's campground or an upscale business resort.

Mendocino County has recently developed a 20-year plan and the group noted that it should be reviewed for consistency with tribal plans as well as to identify additional opportunities for tribal economic development. Tourism could cause people to want to move in to the valley and the group recognizes that it could have an adverse impact on the rural lifestyle that is valued by tribal members.

Tribal Council Focus Group

The Tribal Council focus group was conducted on November 20, 2007. The focus group discussion covered the Tribes' planning needs, community outreach, establishing an enterprise corporation, natural resource management and land use.

Long-Range Planning

Council members discussed the need for a comprehensive, long-range plan. In addition, it was noted that the Tribes have no planning office or staff planner to monitor and promote the achievement of planning objectives.

Members noted that each tribal administration over time "has its own agenda" and that it contributes to the sense of a lack of management continuity that is shared by many tribal members. Having a defined plan would provide "a roadmap" for Tribal Council leaders that would foster a shared sense of a clear direction for Tribal Council decisions.

The group noted that many Tribal Council members feel like they have to "micromanage" the day-to-day administration of tribal programs and services when they should be functioning primarily as legislators. There is a need to adopt a number of ordinances that affect the use and management of the reservation. Having planning objectives in place would provide a basis for drafting those ordinances.

The group also noted the importance of exercising tribal sovereignty and not relying on the federal government to determine management priorities for the reservation.

Community Outreach

The group acknowledged that tribal members want a clear indication of the Tribal Council's goals and objectives. Having a plan in writing would show the tribal community that the Tribal Council is working to improve the conditions on the reservation.

A plan would also address the tribal community's desire for more information on the Tribal Council's progress in improving conditions. Although information is always available at the Tribal Council offices, tribal members indicate that more is needed. Concern was expressed by the group that "people expect the Council to come to their house to tell them what is going on." Making better use of the Poekan newspaper and the Tribes' website are considered an important strategy to inform the tribal community.

Establishing an Enterprise Corporation

The group noted that the tribal government has attempted to establish an enterprise corporation in the past. The effort proved to be controversial and the group expressed frustration that community meetings on the subject have resulted in “too many conflicting opinions” to achieve consensus or even a majority of support.

Defining corporate bylaws was particularly controversial. The community indicated that they “felt they didn’t have enough control,” even though they could vote on who would serve on the corporation’s Board of Directors.

The group stated there is concern over liability issues for the Tribal Council when conducting business ventures. Establishing a corporation would protect the Tribes against litigation that might arise over business matters. The group discussed various corporation chartering strategies and noted that a federally chartered corporation under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act has significant advantages in that it provides tax exemption and can be attractive to potential investors.

The group also noted that having a long-range economic development plan would help make the Tribes more efficient and save money. They also noted that having business plans in place for tribally sponsored initiatives would also increase efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Natural Resource Management

The Tribal Council is also considering adopting ordinances that would affect natural resources. Poaching is of special concern, for fish and wildlife and for wood gathering. The group expressed concern that tribal members should only take what they need and that there is a problem with some people taking more than they need and taking it “over the hill.”

Land Use Planning

The group agreed that there is a need for an updated Land Use Plan, Community Master Plan and a Zoning Ordinance. Decisions need to be made designating appropriate parcels for housing development that are tied in with current land uses and the anticipated future expansion of utility infrastructure.

The group noted that tribal members move off the reservation to find better jobs but after 20 - 25 years, they want to come home. If the Tribes had housing available they would have no trouble filling them with tribal members, especially with the high prices for housing outside the valley.

Housing Focus Group

The Housing focus group was conducted with members of the Round Valley Indian Housing Authority staff and Board of Directors on December 10, 2007. The focus group discussion covered the Tribes' planning needs, housing development issues, population growth and lifestyle issues.

Planning Issues

The Round Valley Indian Housing Authority maintains a 5-year plan under the requirements of the Native American Housing and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA) block grant program. The program provides funding for the construction of low-income housing on the reservation.

The group observed that there is no overall Community Master Plan or current Zoning ordinance to provide guidance for housing developments outside of the NAHASDA housing plan. A zoning map prepared in the late 1970s is missing. There are no readily available maps of the infrastructure systems. Currently, the tribal managers from the Tribes' real estate, EPA, and water utility programs are working on a development checklist for sites that could be used for homesite leases. Of particular concern is the use of septic systems and wells. In addition, sites designated for homes must be surveyed.

Focus group members commented on the need for a tribal planning office and a current long-range plan for the Tribes that would include a Community Master Plan. Planning for housing as well as infrastructure such as water, sewage and electrical service is essential as is establishing criteria for undeveloped housing sites.

Housing Development Issues

Currently, there are approximately 120 low-income families in need of housing. Although NAHASDA grants are providing funding for construction, the level of funding has grown tighter in recent years. IHS funding for infrastructure for water and wastewater systems is compromised by slow development schedules and inflation. As a result, it is difficult to attain housing goals.

There is land available for housing although there is no formal designation as such. A 60-acre parcel along Highway 162 north of Covelo needs to be designated for commercial and residential development. Infrastructure expansion will be necessary for future housing and commercial development since the current system will only accommodate existing housing and new housing currently under construction under the NAHASDA program.

The RVIHA attempted to launch a self-help housing program with initial grant funding from the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. The program required a minimum of 10 families committed to providing 40 man-hours of labor each week during house construction. It was noted that the required 40 hours could be divided among family members. An additional benefit was that the program would have had the effect of teaching tribal youth that a reasonable amount of work can provide them with a new home.

The RVIHA spent two years enlisting tribal members and conducting community meetings but were only able to qualify two families. Ultimately the grant funding to launch the program was withdrawn. As one group member noted, “In the end, everyone wanted something for nothing.” The group speculated that the program might have had more success if it had allowed construction on scattered sites instead of a single location with a water and wastewater system.

Population and Lifestyle

Population on the reservation began to grow after the development of a Comprehensive Plan and the subsequent construction of homes in the 1970s. Tribal members living outside the valley began to return in the hope of finding inexpensive housing. A focus group member noted that the Tribes needed to build at least 10 houses per year since then to keep up with demand but was unable to do so.

The group cited the rural nature and low population level of the valley as desirable to tribal members. They also feel it is important to accommodate tribal members who wish to move back to the reservation. Although they don’t like the thought of significant population growth, they feel that a balance can be obtained with proper planning.

Long-term objectives of the housing plan include the construction of a recreation center and an assisted living center, although additional funding will be necessary. It was noted that a Community Master Plan would greatly improve chances of acquiring funding, especially for housing above and beyond the NAHASDA program.

Economic development also determines the ability of the reservation community to provide the employment that must necessarily accompany new housing. Although tribal members show strong support for service businesses serving the community such as a gas station, market and laundromat, tourism is generally regarded as a viable economic strategy that would minimize population growth. Development of a hotel or motel, a resort and golf course, combined with the new casino, Hidden Oaks Park and construction of a road connecting Highway 162 to Interstate 5 east of the valley could create a viable economy for the Tribes.

Elders Focus Group

The Elders focus group was held on January 24, 2008. The group, consisting of elders and senior tribal leaders, discussed the history of tribal planning and administration, economic development, cultural and lifestyle issues, the impact of drugs and alcohol abuse, and elder care.

Tribal Planning

The group expressed concern that the tribal government has no current long-range plan, but should have one to address future population growth and community needs. The lack of an active planning program and effective community outreach are considered as significant factors preventing tribal administrations from achieving long-term goals.

The community's concern that there is a lack of management continuity between tribal administrations over time was attributed to a number of factors. The group noted that each new administration typically has its own agenda and can easily halt any projects from a previous administration that were in development. Sometimes projects or programs that were initially successful, didn't last simply because management "failed to keep the paper work together."

One member commented on feeling frustrated because there have been plans for a number of good projects in the past that were supported by feasibility studies, but in the end they often weren't carried out simply because of poor leadership or personality conflicts.

Group members expressed concern that the reservation community has been "pulled apart" and that tribal members have become "isolated." Leadership and communication are needed from the tribal government to make the community whole again. The need to teach effective leadership to the tribal children who will serve the community in the future is an important concern for the group.

Economic Development

The group recalled that when sawmills were established in the valley in the 1950s and many tribal members were employed, there was a period of relative prosperity. However, due to aggressive, unsustainable timber harvesting, this prosperity was short-lived. The closure of the mill resulted in severe unemployment on the reservation.

The group noted that, over time, the trees have returned and could be harvested again. The Tribes could use portable sawmills and supplement it with a finishing mill in the valley and put people to work making furniture or prefab buildings similar to what the Hoopa Valley tribe has done with their modular building enterprise.

Tourism was suggested as a viable economic development that could support a number of businesses:

- Hidden Oaks Park, supplemented with additional rental campsites.
- A dude ranch.
- A grocery store/trading post serving both residents and tourists.
- Outdoor recreation: canoeing, river rafting, hiking and horseback riding.

Members noted that having many small businesses could be a safe investment since losing one wouldn't be a financial disaster. The group expressed concern about financing business ventures using tribally owned lands as collateral. They fear that if a business venture fails, the Tribes could feasibly lose the land by forfeiture.

Agriculture and gardens were suggested as economic initiatives that provide benefits beyond their dollar value. As one member put it, "We could produce enough food to feed the community. Maybe not make a lot of money, but it would guarantee good, organic food, some of which could be sold in the valley." It was also noted that there is no longer a community butcher, so that despite all the reservation cattle, tribal members buy imported meat from the local store at high prices.

The group felt that it was essential for the Tribes to establish an enterprise corporation to conduct business ventures. They felt that Tribal Councils over the years have never formally established a corporation because they have not been able to agree on an acceptable financial relationship with the corporation.

Culture and Lifestyle

A group member noted that the tribal community is becoming more aware of the need to come together as a community. Community events such as BBQs, horseshoes, dancing and rodeos create a sense of community and foster communication.

Traditional trails on the reservation are increasingly blocked by fences and tribal members are forgetting where they are located and risk being assaulted as trespassers. Group members feel the tribal government needs to establish right-of-ways for the old trail system. It was noted that, at one time, a children's camp on the North Fork Eel was used to teach children how to camp in teepees and build trails and was "a beautiful program" that could be reinstated.

Population growth was a concern to some group members. The rural lifestyle and environment, the natural beauty and low population density were identified as important values that should be protected. The group expressed concern that when tribal members come back to the reservation, they bring urban values that may not be compatible with the rural values that long-term residents hold.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

The group members all expressed concern about drug and alcohol abuse on the reservation. Members noted that methamphetamine labs and marijuana plots are numerous and that they have environmental impacts from the fertilizers used to grow marijuana and the toxic chemicals that are used to manufacture methamphetamines.

One member noted that although marijuana has some beneficial medical uses, most people tend to use it as a recreational drug. Another noted that people make so much money growing marijuana that they have no desire to work at jobs that pay a lot less. They expressed concern that even if the Tribes are successful in creating businesses and jobs, they may have to compete with the marijuana industry for employees.

The effects of alcoholism on the reservation contribute to a sense of shame in the community as a group member commented. Mentally, people have a lot of anger and pain as a result. Children need to overcome this sense of shame and learn how to be proud of who they are.

Elder Care

Group members cited the need for both an assisted living facility and a convalescent care center for elders. Some felt that, in general, not enough respect is shown for elders in the community. Elders need to be checked on at least once or twice a week. Tribal members who are working and raising children find it difficult to take care of elderly relatives. A group member suggested that children can help elders with repairs and gardening chores and that it is important to teach children that they are needed in this way.

Establishing an assisted living facility would help make sure that elders' needs are being met, making their end of life much more pleasant. A convalescent center is desirable because it is so difficult for family members to visit elders who are recuperating from surgery in convalescent centers outside of the valley.

The Round Valley Indian Housing Authority has planned for an assisted living facility. A convalescent center, however, is currently not cost effective as the group noted, due to the small number of tribal members in need of it at any given time.

Cultural Resources Focus Group

The Cultural Resources focus group was conducted on February 28, 2008. The group consisted of tribal members concerned with cultural preservation. The group discussed cultural preservation issues including the formation of a Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO), environmental preservation, right-of-way issues and tribal jurisdiction.

Cultural Preservation

The group discussed the need to protect numerous cultural resources on the reservation, examples of which include old village sites, burial sites, house pits, chert quarries, traditional gathering and fishing sites, historic buildings and languages.

Group members feel it is important for the Tribes to assert rights under, and to comply with, federal laws governing archeological and historic preservation, environmental protection and religious freedom. New projects that could impact traditional cultural properties should be reviewed under these legal requirements to ensure their protection.

Members suggested establishing a tribal cultural resources department that would be charged with ensuring legal compliance for tribally sponsored projects. It was noted that the department could qualify for funding under a number of grant programs that would allow the Tribes to effectively protect sensitive cultural sites, promote cultural activities and preserve tribal languages. If successful, the cultural resources department could eventually establish a Tribal Historic Preservation Office taking on more formal responsibilities for the preservation of significant historic properties on tribal lands.

The group discussed the desire of tribal members to display and protect cultural resources and to repatriate cultural items in public and private collections. They noted that the Tribes do not have a cultural museum or curation facility and that old cultural items have to be handled very carefully. It was suggested that public and private collections were unlikely to permanently return cultural items, but would certainly loan those items for exhibits, especially if the Tribes had the capability to properly care for and display them.

Establishing a tribal cultural center with displays of cultural items would also serve as a center for cultural activities, language preservation and a place to teach tribal children about their heritage and their environment. As the Tribes develop their tourism based business enterprises, the cultural center would play an important role as a visitor attraction and source of income.

Environmental Preservation

Members commented that the Tribes' culture is inextricably tied to the environment. Cultural activities such as fishing and hunting, food and herb gathering depend on responsible natural resource management to protect habitat for fish and game and to preserve gathering areas and culturally significant plant species such as tan oak trees.

The members feel it is necessary for the Tribal Council to establish a Fish & Wildlife Commission and ordinances to ensure sustainable hunting and fishing practices. They also felt that it was critical for the Tribal Council to be proactive in fighting for water rights and for adequate flows in the Eel River to ensure the survival of the salmon fishery. Effective rangeland management was also noted as necessary to protect cultural sites as well as springs and riparian areas that have cultural significance.

Right-of-Way Issues

The group noted the traditional system of trails on the reservation as an important cultural resource. Tribal members have noted that fencing and locked gates are increasingly cutting off these trails. This is a land use and right-of-way issue as is the problem with landlocked parcels on the reservation.

Group members noted that property laws typically require the provision of access to properties whether by right-of-way or easement and that the tribal government needs to assert the authority to designate right-of-ways on the reservation and to ensure access to all parcels. A land use plan and a zoning ordinance would be part of this effort. The group noted that it might ultimately require litigation, but that it is important for the Tribes to be timely in asserting this authority.

Tribal Jurisdiction and Priorities

Group members support the establishment of a tribal court insofar as it would provide additional authority over the Tribes' natural and cultural resources and land uses. The group also feel it is necessary for the Tribal Council to establish an enterprise corporation that would relieve the Council of the responsibility for managing economic development activities and thereby concentrate efforts on planning activities, establishing a tribal court, passing ordinances, and pursuing tribal water rights, the establishment of right-of-ways and easements, and the establishment of a cultural resource department.