



Supplement to 12/11/17 MPWMD Board Packet

Attached are copies of letters received between November 6, 2017 and December 5, 2017. These letters are listed in the December 11, 2017 Board packet under Letters Received.

Author	Addressee	Date	Topic
Michael J. Bowhay	David J. Stoldt	11/1/2017	Monterey Peninsula Country Club Dunes Shelter (MPWMD Permit No. 31986)
Annie Holdren, PHD	MPWMD Board	11/13/2017	San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project
Louis Trevino	MPWMD Board	11/13/2017	San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project
Kathleen Tiegs	David J. Stoldt	11/15/2017	MPWMD is Recipient of Small Agency Outreach Award
Kathleen Tiegs	David J. Stoldt	11/16/2017	MPWMD is ACWA Region 5 Outreach Winner
Linda Yamane	Christy Fischer (MPWMD Board)	8/26/2017	San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project

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AUG 13 2017

MPWMD

26 August 2017

Christy Fischer
 Executive Director
 Santa Lucia Conservancy
 26700 Rancho San Carlos Rd
 Carmel, CA 93923

Christy,

Thank you for bringing to my attention the bank stabilization project proposed for the south bank of the Carmel River just west of the Rancho San Carlos bridge crossing. I am devastated by this news, as this could potentially wipe out a significant plant resource (*Carex barbarae*) that is culturally vital to the continuity of local Rumsen Ohlone Native American basketry. While there are many *Carex* species, the Santa Barbara or "white root" sedge is the only local species suitable for basketry, and the one used traditionally throughout much of California.

As you know, I am a descendant of the Rumsen Ohlone, the native people of lower Carmel Valley, Point Lobos, and Monterey. Our basketry traditions had essentially vanished, the result of the Spanish missions and other cultural impacts that followed. Many cultural traditions had to be abandoned or were impossible to maintain. Our last basketweavers died in the latter part of the 19th century, and only a couple dozen of our old baskets are known to still exist today.

I am 68 years old and have spent the past 30 years researching and making our traditional baskets, some of which take more than a year of painstaking labor to create. I traveled as far as the east coast and to Europe to study some of our old baskets. Over the years, I have become a master weaver recognized throughout the state and nationally. I was invited by the Smithsonian to demonstrate Ohlone basketry for a week at their 2006 Folklife Festival. The British Museum in London features me in their gallery dedicated to American Indian culture. Baskets made with sedge material from this very Carmel River patch are part of permanent collections of the Oakland Museum, San Francisco Presidio (National Park Service) and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. I mention this only to illustrate that these baskets, and the unusual skill required to make them, are widely recognized and valued as part of our local history and heritage.

The baskets are also important for our Rumsen community. Although I have made a few baskets for museum collections, the majority are for our own use as we practice our traditional skills and prepare our traditional foods together. I have been able to teach aspects of our basketry to

others throughout the years, teaching the techniques of harvesting sedge in this very location. We hope that our basketry won't have to disappear again for lack of the native plant materials necessary to make them. We hope these plants will be here for the next generation and the ones that follow.

After searching for a good source of this sedge species (*Carex barbarae*) for about 20 years, it was truly amazing to finally learn of this patch along the river – at the edge of our ancestral village site of Tucutnut! I have been harvesting the rhizomes here for nearly a decade and it is the best I have ever encountered. I also learned through my ethnographic research that this is the very area our basket makers gathered the sedge roots for their baskets – because the sandy conditions produced such beautiful, long runners, as they still do today.

I have found very small amounts of this sedge species in other Carmel Valley locations, but never in the necessary quantity and deep, sandy deposits of this location. Growth in sand permits the plants to produce the long, straight rhizomes required in basketry. And the large plant bed is necessary for harvesting in rotation, allowing a new generation of rhizomes to grow for a year or more after a particular section has been harvested. When one section is being harvested, others are regenerating new underground runners. The harvesting of these underground stems does not interfere with the growth of the plants or their ability to stabilize the land. In fact, I've noticed over the years that routine harvesting makes for a healthier sedge community, for we hand remove non-native weeds in the process, and help keep the plants free of accumulated dead foliage from past seasons.

When French visitor Abel du Petit-Thouars visited Monterey in October of 1837, he remarked: "These natives make baskets so closely woven that they hold water, which they use to cook their food. To do this they boil the water by plunging red-hot stones into it one after another to introduce the necessary heat. They also make baskets in the form of plates and graceful cups which they ornament on the outside with black feathers from the topknots of the California partridge, with other feathers of different colors and with little pearly shells."

We lost our beautiful baskets once, and those that survived are now primarily in European museum collections. But now that we are producing them in our community again, they are valued as cultural icons and works of art. In 2012 I was recognized by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors for restoring the art of Ohlone basketry and cultivating public awareness and respect for Rumsen Ohlone history. In 2013 I was awarded the California Indian Heritage Preservation Award by the Society for California Archaeology. And earlier this month I was honored by the Monterey County Historical Society with their 11th Annual Historic Community Award for my work to preserve and promote local Rumsen language and culture. I point out this recognition not to try to elevate myself, but to put the importance of this traditional art, and the native plants upon which it depends, in a larger historic, cultural, and educational context.

This is an irreplaceable resource worthy of great effort to preserve. I hope we can find a way to do so.

Sincerely,



Louis Trevino
2087 Delaware Street #5
Berkeley, CA 94709

NOV 13 2017

MPWMD

November 13, 2017

Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, Board of Directors
P.O. Box 85
Monterey, CA 93942

To the Board of Directors of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District:

I am writing to emphasize the need for the protection of an important natural and cultural resource present at the site of the Rancho San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project – a sedge bed of the species *Carex barbarae*. I am a member of the Rumsen Ohlone community, active in the revitalization of our Rumsen language, our culinary traditions alongside my partner Vincent Medina (Chochenyo Ohlone), and other cultural practices. We are the indigenous people of the Carmel Valley and Monterey area. This species of sedge is called **xuyxuy** in our Rumsen language, and is central to our traditional art of basketry. Its presence at the site in question demands special consideration.

xuyxuy is vital to the creation of our baskets. The root of this sedge was cultivated by our people from before in the making of utilitarian, ornamental, and ceremonial baskets, and is still tended to by members of our community so that the traditional art of our basketry can be practiced today and will continue into the future. The continuity of our basketry cannot be taken for granted, just as the **xuyxuy** cannot be taken for granted. The revitalization of our art of basketry has been undertaken for more than three decades by Linda Yamane, a Rumsen Ohlone leader who lives in Seaside. For years, she carefully researched (and continues to research) ethnographic notes and visited some of the small number of extant old Ohlone baskets in order to understand our specific basketry materials, techniques, and designs – and then she put that knowledge into practice. In the process, she has identified significant cultural plants, developing a close relationship with our homeland as she quietly tends to willows, bracken ferns, and

the sedge bed that will be affected by the Rancho San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project. By her weaving, Linda is mending our material link to our old people, giving physical form to the words given to ethnographers, anthropologists, and linguists by elders who remembered these things. Her baskets honor our people from before, and allow us today to not only know about, but also to experience the beauty of our culture. The health and persistence of the sedge bed along the streambank is crucial to the continuity of that invaluable work.

Generations of Rumsen Ohlone people to come deserve the opportunity to tend to and use the sedge bed at the streambank for baskets. The loss of this precious resource would be a terrible blow to the cultural revitalization so hard-fought for by my predecessors; it would inhibit not only my own process of learning our basketry, but that of countless others including those yet to come. Our baskets, from the utilitarian waršín (winnowing basket) and šiiwen (burden basket) to the ornamental and ceremonial tuupen (ear sticks of incised bone with feathered basketry ornamentation) and missix tiprin ('beautiful baskets,' feathered baskets adorned with carefully made olivella disc beads), are foundations of our material culture. Each of these basket types requires the sedge root, and so without the bed at the streambank, which is a sedge bed certainly used by our direct ancestors, they will not be possible to make in the same way in the future.

I thank you for considering the great importance of the sedge bed present at the site to be affected by the Rancho San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project, for empathizing with our need of that plant as we continue to live and practice our cultural ways, and for protecting the sedge bed as the streambank is stabilized.

šuururu xuyxuytk (blessings on the xuyxuy place, the home of the sedge bed),

Louis Trevino

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NOV 13 2017

MPWMD

To: Board of Directors
Monterey Peninsula Water Management District

From: Annie Holdren, PhD

Date: 13 November 2017

Re: San Carlos Road Streambank Stabilization Project

Please give significant weight to the need to retain and restore the native plants located on the Carmel River streambank near San Carlos Road. In particular, the sedge plants hold significant natural and cultural value.

The stream bank near San Carlos Road has provided an unparalleled habitat for a large bed of sedge to grow along the Carmel River. This particular sedge bed, in turn, has provided an unmatched, renewable resource for Native California basketmaking materials.

If the Board is in any way uncertain about the cultural value of a bank restoration that retains the sedge bed, then the Board has not received enough information. If such is the case, I strongly encourage an expenditure for a Cultural Resource Study.