



T'epot'aha'l

The People of the Salinan Tribe

Vol. 25 No 8

August, 2025

Our Journey to Federal Recognition: An Unexpected Story



Just a few weeks ago, our tribal application for federal acknowledgment was featured on the front cover of the SLO NewTimes, and they did a fantastic job covering our story.

It was wonderful to discover there's growing community interest in understanding who we are and learning about our journey.

What made this story particularly interesting was how it evolved. When we were first contacted about the interview, we were told it would be a general piece discussing the challenges facing non-federally recognized tribal groups in California. The media request was handled by our appointed spokesperson, Michael Erin Woody. However, about ten minutes into the interview, the reporter discovered that we were actually under consideration for federal acknowledgment by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

As background, our council had deliberately chosen not to issue press releases or make announcements about our application's acceptance in Washington, D.C. We made this decision because we didn't want to create a spectacle around the process. After 20 years of frustration, we simply wanted to focus on our work and finally advance this application to where it needed to be.

Once the reporter understood the significance of our current situation, the SLO NewTimes decided to pivot the story's direction, crafting a community-focused piece about the federal recognition process itself.

The interviews that Ken Pierce and I participated in were enjoyable experiences. Emma Montalbano had clearly done her homework, researching the federal acknowledgment process thoroughly and asking insightful questions. She also arranged for photographer Jayson Mellom to work with Michael on capturing images for the story. A day before he was to come over and take a few pictures of our artifacts and documents, Jayson asked if we could go find a few outdoor places as well. So we took off at 6 AM in the freezing cold to get so quick pictures along our coastal territory.

We had no idea this would become the cover story until just 48 hours before publication. The community response has been overwhelming and universally supportive. If you'd like to read the full article, you can find it online at: <https://www.newtimesslo.com/news/local-tribe-navigates-federal-acknowledgement-process-in-pursuit-of-tribal-sovereignty-16931681>.

Submitted By: Michael Woody



Maritime Summer Program for Kids, Today's topic was the Salinan Tribe

My great niece Harper Ott was able to join me as we spent the first hour talking about the tribe and how we lived around the Morro Bay area for thousands of years. Where all the resources for life was available here. I told the Serpent legend, we then visited the garden and talked about the native plants that tribal member Melanie (Pierce) Ritcheson and I planted and their uses.

We also discussed how the bedrock mortars were used, and talked about rock art and the messages our ancestors left behind. We returned to the museum and the children spent the last hour making their own little tule boats and rock paintings. A big thank you to Melanie and Lee Ritcheson for getting the garden area cleaned up and watered, It looks great. We plan on doing more planting of native plants, and eventually be able to put up some interpretative signs.

Submitted By: Patti Dunton



Plant a Seed of Change for our Next Generations of Native Leaders

The 1600's New England education via the Puritan (Pure blood) colonizers started America's mainstream core curriculum. From there, things went downhill in terms of inclusive input; who could attend school; who made the rules. Race division was included in this colonial era.

Equal/Equality means providing the same to all. In terms of education what was offered was built on European Colonizers view point. "ALL", ruled out Equal status to Native American Indians; African slaves; 'people of color'; and female rights/choices= 'White-washed' education.

Equity (fairness & justice) is used to definition USA educational opportunities. What is ignored is that WE did/do not all start from the same place. Through the lens of Equity, one could acknowledge and make adjustments to this imbalance. For example, in public school doctrine English is the recognized USA language. American Indians Nations speak over 200+ languages, yet are considered a foreign language, so therefore not offered to 'the majority'. Most all of us learned World; USA; California history that focused on "The fight for Independence for USA". Nationally, students rate HISTORY as the most boring subject! Umm! Yet, it is OUR responsibility to ensure each of our children grow up learning their native values and beliefs, through Native America's lens.

Continued on next page:

TODAY: We can complain. Or we can “peacefully interrupt-by planting seeds for change.” Only 5.6% of public-school teachers are prepared to teach grade K-9 outside their race, to students from other cultural communities. That teachers still try is amazing! The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), “White K-9 grade students (22.1 million) significantly outnumber Native American, Alaskan Native students (449,000) in public schools. Yet more than 50% Native students are still not finishing high school?” For our children, we are responsible, and we can change!

EXAMPLE: For eighteen years I had an opportunity to implement a different approach to help Native students in Kenai Peninsula, Alaska’s school district (KPBSD). In 2010 I had the honor of building a team who focused outside the classroom/school site, creating a Native Youth Leadership team (KPNYL). We started with nine native 9-12 grade Alaskan/Native American students, focused on Native Leadership. This built to include ten tribal communities with public schools that allowed our team to create Native Youth Leadership teams, outside of school. Native (and non-native) 9-12 grader, willing to attend once a month-meetings, could earn hours in community services, led by tribe and family leaders, earned GRAD credits based on district leadership standards, and learn Social Emotional Life-skills at workshops. Their only requirement was to learn leadership through the lens of their Indigenous/native cultures. If they didn’t know it, we linked them to one they wanted to explore. In 4 years, 2 credits out of 22 required could be earned. We raised our own money to travel district wide to meet the other community teams; earn their way to state and eventually sent delegates at national level to Native Youth Leadership conference. The most flak I received? Complaints from non-native educators & parents feeling “Leaders should have to be passing all the other school grade requirements before doing any “Extra-curricular”. (no pun intended) but “WE Natives shot that one down fast!” Holidays, weekends, nights the team grew to over 300 served per year. In 2016 KPBSD Native Students raised their public-school graduation rate from a low 53% to 91+%. And, Native Student HS Graduation carried the State of Alaska’s HS GRAD rates overall. Individual family units can do this. Growing together, like cousins I grew up with, made it more fun. We haven’t changed the public education system YET! But that doesn’t keep any of us from ‘planting the seeds of change’, so our tribal community of leaders can grow strong.

Interested in ways to support Native Youth Leadership? 907-394-1362; skinnerstories@yahoo.com;
Bonnie Pierce, Salinan Elder, 40+ years in the field of Social Work & Native Education



Indian Cemetery Work Day

At Mission San Antonio



Protecting the ancestors at San Antonio Mission. Bella Flood 11 years old, volunteered a precious summer day restoring the cemetery wall with her grandad Bruce Flood. We started the work day with a prayer and sage, followed by sharing a pan of homemade cinnamon rolls, and then walking through the Indian museum, and taking a photo of the first Indian marriage in California. Spending time with my granddaughter in a special place was great.

Our next work day is Saturday, **August 23rd**. 8 am. To 11 am. (If there is a date change if will be announced).

Contact Bruce Flood @ 805-903-3089 If you have any questions or comments contact the Tribal Office and leave a message. @ 805-464-2650

Submitted By: Council Member Bruce Flood



Salinan Fishing

For Salinan Council Member and Capt. John Piatti, it was time to go farther than before. The last couple deep-sea fishing outings in the Estero Bay area had proved less than successful, with smaller and fewer fish caught. So, the crew loaded up the COMANCHE BLONDE at dawn on Wednesday morning, the 24-foot private sport-fisher he purchased after retiring from years as a union pipefitter, and set out from the Morro boat launch. Onboard, Salinan Elder and cousin Ed Pierce, longtime friend Jerry Clay, Jr., and John's brother Robert. Destination? The Big Sur coastline, where they hoped to find aquatic catches worth the effort and ever-rising price of fuel.

Piatti had some insights on why the catch in the Estero Bay area has been off the last couple of years. "Now, the commercial sportfishing charters are numerous, and they are trying to survive in an industry that faces constant scrutiny and regulation," he said, "but it doesn't make a lot of sense to try to regulate the catch limits of some species of fish." Piatti would like to see the ocean either open to most catches, or closed entirely if that is what it takes for the species to repopulate and thrive. Current regulation allow a licensed angler to catch and keep only two Vermillion (Red) Cod, one Copper Cod, and ten fish a day total other than two Halibut, and two Lingcod of at least 22 inches length.

With a soft wind and a minimal swell, the party started dropping lines up the coast about 2 hours after they started out. They immediately metered fish, and began to catch Blue fish and Olive Bass in significant numbers. After a round or two of this, they decided that they needed to find a different spot where more desired Reds, Coppers and Lingcod may be laying in wait. Sure enough, fishing in depths of 140 foot to 60 foot, quite shallow, but with the ocean's bottom showing nice irregularities than tend to attract bottom fish, the group soon caught their limits of Vermillion and Copper Cods, and the dinosaur headed Lingcods of various blue hues. Rounded out with the other fish, their limits were soon reached. Once all was iced down and stowed, Capt. Piatti kicked the twin Suzuki outboards into gear and they made the travel back to Morro Harbor in a flat out hour-and-half, at speeds seldom safe on the roguish Pacific Ocean.

"We'll let them sit on ice over night; makes filleting them a much easier and cleaner task, said Piatti. Pierce called some relatives to come share in the bounty, and Clay, having caught the largest fish on the day, selected a few of the best to take with him. Still, Capt. John knew that he'd be making rounds, delivering fish to several family members that may not need such catches to survive as our ancestors once, did, but certainly appreciated and enjoyed them none the less. If you weren't on the receiving end this trip's catch, keep hope for more successful runs this year before the season closes. Piatti said there is a rumor of White Sea Bass being caught to the South, and sighting and catches of Blue Fin Tuna that follow the warmer ocean current off our coastline.

Submitted By: Robert Piatti



Summer Solstice

We appreciate and thank Harvey's Honey Huts for donating the restrooms and wash station for our solstice celebrations.

ATTENTION: Calling Salinan Tribal Members

We are actively planning and participating in various aspects of our informal partnership with the Willow Creek Conservancy (see their website for more general information). We currently have two or three slots for a seed-gathering team to initialize this effort, starting almost immediately. Interested? Please TEXT Council Member Robert Piatti at 949-677-0549 with your name and potential availability. There will be many opportunities to share in making this Conservancy a location that will become special to our tribe and the general public. Volunteer now!



Discover the Nature of California

California Biodiversity Day Celebratory events throughout September 6-14, 2025

Contact Person:
Council Member
Mary Rodgers

Biodiversity is at the core of the remarkable nature in California and is essential to the survival and sustainability of the culture, language, and people who rely upon these lands and waters. September 7th is California Biodiversity Day, a time to inspire discovery and connection to the nature of California, while encouraging actions to steward and protect it.

We warmly and respectfully invite you and your tribe to participate in this year's events September 6-14, 2025. Learn more about California Biodiversity Day at bit.ly/CABiodiversityDay2025.

California Biodiversity Day is an opportunity for your tribe to host, 'collaborate, or participate in an event and share the great work your tribe is doing with the public. Here are some examples of the types of events that tribes have hosted for California Biodiversity Day in previous years:

1. Guided walks
2. Interactive art, scavenger hunts, games, etc.
3. Trainings on the importance of fire on the landscape
4. Demonstrations of basket weaving, processing plants, traditional food or stewardship practices, and sustainable hunting/fishing practices
5. Observing and recording the biodiversity in an area (known as a "bioblitz")

Quotes from Native Elders

Each one must learn for himself the highest wisdom. It cannot be taught in words.

Smowhala, Wanapum

Men die but live again in the real world of Wakan-Tanka, where there is nothing but the spirits of all things; and this true life we may know here on earth if we purify our bodies and minds thus coming closer to Watan-Tanka who is all purity.

Black Elk,
Oglala Sioux, 1863-1950

Every struggle, whether won or lost, strengthens us for the next to come. It is not good for people to have an easy life. They become weak and inefficient when they cease to struggle. Some need a series of defeats before developing the strength and courage to win a victory.

Victorio,
Member Apache, 1820-1880



"Happy Belated Birthday"
to Tribal Elder
Yvonne Ayala



Salinan Words of the Month

Guide to sounds

Fire
TA' A' U'

Rock
EXPA

ts – sound at the end of cats
tr – make a t but curl your tongue
(almost sounds like a ch)
' – sound in the middle of uh-oh
(glottal stop)

P' t' k' ts' ch'
consonants said at the same
time as a glottal stop ('); they
make a strong, emphasized pop!
x – guttural throaty h sound

a	father	ay	pie
e	get	ow	mow
i	beat.	oy	toy
o	hope		
u	due		

double vowels (**aa, ae**) are
the same sound but longer
in length

Notice!!!

This is an Election Year

This year's election letters of intent must be received no later than August 15th
2025, to be included in the September and October Newsletters!
At the Tribal Office or editor@salinatribe.com

All letters must be typed out and signed for better readability!

Notice !!!



Remember the Newsletter will be ONLINE ONLY.

Contact Kenneth Pierce at editor@salinatribe.com with your email address to receive a Newsletter online or pick one up at the Tribal Office.

Tribal Fundraiser Update

At this time our fundraiser has been put on hold, when a date is scheduled it
will be announced!



We have a new T-Shirt design and it will be available at the general meetings
it will also be on the website soon for viewing.

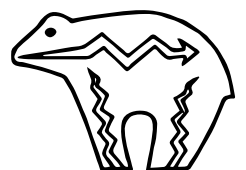
The following sizes are available,

Women's – Sm, to 3xl

sweatshirts size sm to 4xl

Men's – Sm, Med Lg, xLg, xxLg, xxxLg

We also have hooded sweatshirts



**NEW
ADDITIONS**

In women's t-shirts we have size small to 3xl.
And we have have sweatshirts sizes small to 4xl.

Tribal Office 8270 Morro Road Atascadero, CA 93422
 Phone: 805-464-2650 Fax: 805-464-2651 Email: info@salinatribe.com
 www.salinatribe.com

August 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Tribal Business meeting 6:00pm	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	Cemetery 23 WorkDay at Mission San Antonio 8 am -11 am
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tribal business meeting is on the 2nd Wednesday of each month						

**THERE ARE NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES ALLOWED AT ANY TRIBAL EVENT.
 PLEASE USE INFO@SALINANTRIBE.COM TO EMAIL THE OFFICE**

➡ TRIBAL COUNCIL ⬅

Traditional Lead:

Mary Rodgers
 (805) 674.1525
 marytwohawks@gmail.com

Contemporary Lead:

Gary Pierce
 (805) 610.0037

Elder Council:

Leslie Montgomery
 (805) 674.6006
 yourkiddingme160@gmail.com

Kenneth Pierce
 (559) 392.1950
 pgi@sti.net

Sharon Thomas
 (805) 459.4935
 sheshopsharon@aol.com

Yvonne Davis
 (805) 391.3619
 palmtreezz@aol.com

Pamela Flood
 (805) 234.6854
 info@salinatribe.com

Josh Cody
 (805) 459.4638
 cody.josh@gmail.com

Michael Woody
 (805) 305.0660
 info@salinatribe.com

Dayna Sciocchetti
 (805) 801.4929
 dsciocchetti7601@gmail.com

Robert Piatti
 (949) 677.0549
 monitoring@salinatribe.com

Bruce Flood
 (805) 903.3089
 bruce@salinatribe.com

John Piatti Jr.
 (805) 703.0629
 boheathan@hotmail.com

Salinan Tribe
8270 Morro Road
Atascadero, CA 93422

T'epot'aha'l The People of the Salinan Tribe

REMEMBER TO PRAY TO kensha:nel (CREATOR) TO keeheak (PROTECT) ALL lu wa' (MEN) AND lets'e (WOMAN) WHO ARE SERVING OUR COUNTRY. AND BRING THEM Ta'ma (HOME) SAFE.

Vision of the Salinan Tribe

We, as the Salinan Tribe, follow the way of our ancestors as we walk the path of our heritage toward becoming complete individuals. We exercise our rights as a sovereign entity. We continue to reawaken our culture. Each and every tribal member has an equal voice.

We, as the Salinan Tribe, commit to honoring the rights of each and every tribal member to practice our spiritual, individual, or religious beliefs. We remember and honor our ancestors, elders, and children now and for all generations to come.

We as the Salinan Tribe, continue to gather as a tribal family.



salinatribe.com

