



# Media Release

## **State Water Board to Help Showcase Cultural and Environmental Awareness During California Native American Day Sept. 28 *Events are Free and Public is Invited***

**For IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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The 51<sup>st</sup> Native American Day scheduled for Friday on the west steps of the Capitol will showcase how enduring Native American cultural traditions are tied to the environment as well as efforts to conserve California's natural resources.

The State Water Resources Control Board is of many government agencies volunteering throughout the day at its Cultural Heritage Pavilion.

Representatives from some of California's 150 tribes will have numerous educational displays at the Native American Day festivities. Displays include dolls, boats, baskets and more made out of thick, fibrous tule reeds; a youth program covering traditional tribal cooking, ingredients and the original "locavore" foraging; traditional fire suppression and wildfire management methods, and much more.

The Cultural Heritage Pavilion will be staffed by State Water Board employees, including Moises Moreno-Rivera in the Office of Public Participation, who helped organize the event and is passionate about the overall message.

"This is where the cultural practitioners can share the importance of protecting California's plants, animals and natural resources – especially water – for the sake of also protecting culture," Moreno-Rivera said. "When we don't take care of our rivers, when we don't take care of our plants and animals, when we're not good stewards of the land, we're not just affecting wildlife; we're affecting culture."

Moreno-Rivera said he was honored to be invited recently to help a tribal practitioner gather tule reeds recently and then build a traditional boat, which will be on display at the pavilion.

"We were there with the practitioner, her daughter and granddaughter, and we were very fortunate to see the process and to know that the culture is living on with the next generation," he added.

Donna Begay, the Server Operations Manager for the State Water Board, is a former tribal chairwoman for the Tubatulabal in the Kern Valley. She remembers visiting Capitol Park for the first time as a little girl in 1968 on then-California Indian Day for the planting of a commemorative acorn tree near the corner of 13<sup>th</sup> and N streets.

"My parents were very much involved in activism and civil rights for native Americans and I learned from a very young age that we were supposed to be engaged and participate," said Begay, who has been heavily involved in helping with technical details for Native American Day.

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“It’s been a long journey. When you’re young and born urban, you don’t really see the cultural importance until later on in life and realize this is very important,” said Begay. “We want this to keep going and I have faith that this will continue for many more years.”

Native American Day begins Friday at 9:10 a.m. with a welcome and opening prayer, followed by a cultural sharing at 9:30 p.m. by the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians. The grand entry and posting of colors is at 10 a.m. Many more events and educational opportunities follow. All of the events are free and open to the public.

Portraits taken of tribal elders and their families will be promptly displayed on a share site, <https://NAD2018CaliforniaStateCapital.Shutterfly.com/>.

***ATTN: Media:*** *Subjects in these posted pictures will have signed releases. Those pictures are available for social media reposting or media coverage.*

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