



Yurok tribe says downed logs extracted from redwood forest to be carved into dugout canoes for cultural use and tourism

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During the month of November, the Yurok Tribe's Watershed Restoration Department removed three downed old growth redwood logs from the Redwood Experimental Forest Located in Klamath. This was a continuation of the Yurok Cultural and Ceremonial Revitalization Project that began in 2016 with an agreement that was reached when the Yurok Tribe's request to identify and remove logs for cultural purposes was approved by the Six Rivers National Forest and the Pacific Southwest Research Station. The agreement cites the 2008 Farm Bill which approves forest products for traditional and cultural purposes by Tribes. In 2016, one log was extracted for cultural use and several others were identified. The three logs extracted this year will be used to carve up to 10 traditional Yurok dugout canoes for use in the Redwood Yurok Canoe Tours, a Yurok Country attraction slated to open this spring. The remaining wood will be split for traditional plank houses and other cultural uses.

The Redwood Experimental Forest (formerly known as the Yurok Experimental Forest) lies within the Yurok Ancestral Territory and contains some of the last

stands of pristine old growth redwood. It is necessary to use old growth redwood to carve traditional dugout canoes due to their size and physical properties.

Carver Dave Severns has been contracted to carve two canoes. He said, “My teacher George Wilson took a look at this log and said ‘I never had the chance to carve on a log that nice.’ I’m thrilled to have the opportunity. And in the end it’s about teaching the children.” Canoe Tours Manager Josh Norris, states, “This program will be the first of many to provide cultural and ecological knowledge revitalization as well as economic opportunity for the Yurok Tribe.”

“Over the last twenty years there has been a shortage of logs suitable for the construction of these masterpieces that hold great spiritual value for the Yurok people. Carvers would sometimes have to wait years, or a lifetime, for the opportunity to carve a traditional canoe,” said Yurok Tribe Chairman, Joseph L. James.

“I feel blessed that the USFS has begun a new era of cooperation, recognition and respect of traditional tribal land uses and management. We are not simply using three downed logs, we are using our cultural resources to further enhance our rich culture. The carving project will also involve our youth, carrying on one of our most sacred skills-carving and navigating the river.”

“The Forest Service is really excited to work with the Yurok Tribe and to be a part of a cultural renaissance for the Yurok, said Ted O. McArthur, Six Rivers Forest Supervisor.

Also instrumental in making this process move forward were Devin McMahon, Partnership Coordinator/Tribal Liaison for Six Rivers National Forest, and Forest Service Research Ecologist Frank Lake.

According to Lake, “Now that we have gone through this process a couple of times it will make similar requests much more efficient.”

Source:<https://kymkemp.com/2019/12/25/yurok-tribe-says-downed-logs-extracted-from-redwood-forest-to-be-carved-into-dugout-canoes-for-cultural-use-and-tourism/>