

PRELADO NOTICIAS

La Purísima Mission State Park Land Acknowledgement: We are on the ancestral land of the Chumash people who have lived here since time immemorial. We honor the Chumash people of the past and of the present who share their stories and history with us. We thank our Chumash community of today for helping us understand their vibrant culture of the past and present.



Photos submitted by Rob Glasgow.

*In Commemoration of Native American Heritage Month
Winter 2023 Theme: Native American Influence on U.S.*



Save the Date!
Founding Mass & Concert
Friday, December 8

Founding Day Festivities

BY ROB GLASGOW

Founding Day festivities will be held on Friday, Dec 8, 2023. The only Catholic Mass of the year will be held at noon. Our Concert will start at 7:00pm with the Cabrillo High School Madrigals performing once again. Dress warmly. Refreshments will follow the concert in La Sala. Docents receive 2 tickets which will be available in the Visitor Center. Additional tickets can be purchased for \$10 at the Visitor Center, Tienda, or on-line at lapurisimamission.org. We sure could use your assistance with setting up and helping with any of the activities for the event, please contact Rob Glasgow,

(805) 733-7181, or chickenman5@aol.com.

Church Decorating: Sat., Dec. 2 at 10:00AM

Lantern set-up: Fri., Dec 8 at 1pm

Lantern Lighting: Fri., Dec 8 at 5:30pm

Welcoming Guests for Concert: Fri., Dec 8 at 6:30pm

Refreshments set-up in La Sala: Fri., Dec 8 at 6:30PM

Lantern removal: Sat., Dec 9 at 9am

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A Solid Foundation

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

It's delightful to meet someone well-grounded and focused with a solid foundation. Meet Sean Porras. He joined La Purísima Mission State Historic Park's Interpretive team just two months ago. He's always wanted to be a docent, either here or at Misson San Miguel Arcángel. Upon hearing that there might be an opening, he applied and was interviewed.

Sean's hobby has been mission history over many years; he's visited all 21 and has a good collection of books on missions. One might say that his educational background as an archaeologist has primed him well. He has a master's degree in History of Antiquity-Syrio/Palestinian Archaeology (Biblical) from Andrews University in Michigan. Interestingly, he's been on archaeological digs in Jordan. Most recently, he's been a teacher at small, private school.



Photo: Sean Porras by Michele Jimenez-Holtz.

When asked what he enjoys most about his job, the response came easy as his eyes lit up. He's a teacher at heart. He really loves working with people and is passionate about sharing knowledge and history about the missions. He's thrilled when he sees "the lightbulb turn on" for visitors and enjoys taking the history journey with them. He's proud of the State Parks uniform. He shares that this is a living history museum. Everyone's on vacation and people really want to be here; their attitudes are great and they have a fun time being here. He's also got a great bunch of co-workers!

I queried what he'd like to do in the future, and his response was, "It doesn't get much better than this!" Of course, if an opportunity for a permanent job were to open up, he would definitely pursue it. Teaching in some capacity is his focus. For someone wanting to work for California State Parks, he offers this advice: figure out what you want to do and find your niche and educate yourself. All that makes for a recipe for success. One can find rewarding employment through the State Parks. Sean finds his job very fulfilling and feels very fortunate and blessed to be here. He thanks the Lord for opening the door for him and has enabled and empowered him to do a good job. He's also grateful to his spouse for her support and for encouraging him.

If you want to know more about him or his archaeological interests, just ask. He'd enjoy sharing a story or two.

Our staff, volunteers, and docents have colorful backgrounds and interests. What brings us all together is our love of La Purísima Mission!

The Many Hats of State Parks

BY EMILY BERGSTRAND

About a year ago, I was given an opportunity to learn more about other positions within state parks and fill some holes when the Santa Barbara Sector office technician retired. Since then, I have been processing permits for Special Events here at the beaches and assisting the office staff here in different ways. It has been a really wonderful experience for me and when there was a need to work in the Refugio office more time, I transferred to the beach. I love working with the staff here and look forward to growing in this position. I started at La Purísima as a docent and loved the opportunity it gave me to share California History with visitors and Students from across the state and even the world. The past few years working at the mission, it was a blessing to do that very thing as my job. The mission of California State Parks is "To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and



Photo submitted by Emily Bergstrand.

creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.” While my job description looks different now, we all contribute to that goal in different capacities. I’m glad to be a part of that!

Editor’s note: We congratulate Emily on her new position as she spreads her wings to new heights. Although she’s wearing a different hat, Emily will be providing a necessary service to State Parks and our visitors. We’ll miss you, Emily, and thank you for the many contributions you made to the mission and to all of us! Happy Trails!

**Get
your
Founding Day Concert
Tickets at the VC or
Online**

One Stop For all Your Holiday Needs

BY TERRI SANDS

Remember the Tienda for your Christmas shopping list; we have a variety of gifts to choose from and several new items. The Tienda is a great place to find unique, one-of-a-kind gifts. Our one-of-a-kind Christmas ornaments are handmade and painted by the docents. We also have new shell ornaments, a lovely brass bell, new t-shirt designs, some good books, and artwork by our docents. If you come to the mission just to shop at the Tienda, parking is free.

We also reconfigured the sales area to better accomodate school groups. It even seems spacier! Come on down and pay us a visit!



Photo: La Tienda gets a new look. Docent Renee Salter will greet you with a smile and is happy to help with your shopping needs. All photos by Michele Jimenez-Holtz.



Photo: New shell ornaments.

And if you’re interested in volunteering at the Tienda, please contact Terri Sands, (805) 727-3055, tsands805@gmail.com.



Photo: Shell ornament and brass bell.

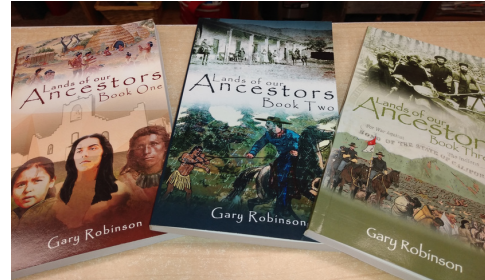


Photo: Ancestors series books by Gary Robinson who recently presented at our docent training.



Photo: New California State Parks t-shirt. I know what I want for Christmas!

**New Tienda
Hours:
Wedn. -- Sun.
Closed Mon/Tue**

Mission Illuminations

BY MICHELLE PITTENGER

Editor's Note: This is a re-print of the article from Autumn 2020 Noticias and is very fitting for this edition's theme.

Have you ever stopped to think about light? We know it's important especially when we trip over something in the dark, but have you really thought about where it comes from or what its significance is outside of science class?

The Franciscans certainly did when they designed and supervised the construction of the mission churches in Alta California. Specifically, the Franciscans were interested in the Winter and Summer solstices and the Autumnal and Vernal (spring) equinoxes.

The church at La Purísima's original site (mission vieja) was built by Chumash neophytes under the direction of Father Fermin Lasuen to illuminate on the equinoxes.



Photo:: Illumination of the church at Mission San Juan Bautista.

According to an email exchange with Dr. Ruben Mendoza, an archaeologist based at Cal State Monterey Bay, who has made a special study of solar illumination in Mission architecture, "the original church...was in fact oriented to the Equinox, and thereby positioned such...as to illuminate the main altar reredos or tabernacle on the Feast of St. Francis near the Autumnal equinox and alternative March 10th for the Vernal equinox." (personal email of July 27, 2020)

The solstices are the shortest and longest days of the year, and the equinoxes mark the shift from Summer to Fall and from Winter to Spring. They are tied to significant dates in the calendar of Holy Days of the Roman Catholic church. The indigenous peoples of Alta California also paid close attention to these seasonal shifts. Humans have long understood the relationship between sunlight and access to food. Dr. Mendoza argues that the Franciscans made deliberate use of this mutual awareness of the significance of the sun to further their cause of conversion. They would equate the sun in the sky with the Son of God. Father Lasuen and his fellow Franciscans were so interested marking these astronomical events they designed the mission churches to highlight the solstices (especially the Winter solstice close to Christmas Day) and equinoxes. Dr. Mendoza has documented several examples of solar illuminations that take place on or around high holy days within the Roman calendar. The main altar tabernacle at

Mission San Juan Bautista lights up on the Winter Solstice: "At dawn on Dec. 21, a sunbeam enters each of these churches and bathes an important religious object, altar, crucifix, or saint's statue in brilliant light. On the darkest day of the year, these illuminations conveyed to native converts the rebirth of light, life, and hope in the coming of the Messiah...."

(www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-the-sun-illuminates-the-spanish-missions-on-winter-solstice-180967619/)

These various missions now host congregants and indigenous descendants who gather to honor the sun on the high feasts of the Catholic church with music, chant, and drums.

However, the church situated at the Mission Vieja site was oriented to mark the equinoctial periods. The sun would have lit up the church around the Feast of St. Francis in the autumn. Francis of Assisi is of course the patronal saint of the order that ran the missionary enterprise in New Spain. It would have lit the church in Spring as well. According to www.catholic.com, Easter can never occur earlier than March 22 or later than April 25. The earliest Palm Sunday can fall would then be March 15. The earliest that Palm Sunday can fall would then be March 15. Thus, the first illumination in an equinoctially oriented church would occur close to Easter. In fact, Easter fell on March 23, 1788. Founding day

was on December 8, 1787. In a world without electric light, sunlight is immensely important to people intimately connected to the land and what it produces. No light means no warmth and no food. Is it any wonder that both the Franciscans and their indigenous converts might have associated the sun with the Divine?

Editor's Note: Michelle's writing on Mission Illuminations references the work of Dr. Ruben Mendoza. He has written several articles and books about the California Missions and indigenous cultures. To learn more, check out the following articles:

[A Sacred Light in the Darkness,](https://voxpopulisphere.com/2019/12/18/ruben-g-mendoza-a-sacred-light-in-the-darkness/)
<https://voxpopulisphere.com/2019/12/18/ruben-g-mendoza-a-sacred-light-in-the-darkness/>

[The Liturgy of Light,](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971017_The_Liturgy_of_Light_Solar_Geometry_and_Kinematic_Liturgical_Iconography_in_an_Early_19th_Century_California_Mission_In_Bolton_The_Journal_of_the_California_Mission_Studies_Association_Volume_28_Number)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971017_The_Liturgy_of_Light_Solar_Geometry_and_Kinematic_Liturgical_Iconography_in_an_Early_19th_Century_California_Mission_In_Bolton_The_Journal_of_the_California_Mission_Studies_Association_Volume_28_Number

[Review of: Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions,](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971019_Review_of_Converting_California_Indians_and_Franciscans_in_the_Missions)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971019_Review_of_Converting_California_Indians_and_Franciscans_in_the_Missions
[Review of: Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions, by James A. Sandos, Indigenous Nations Journal, 2008, pp. 161-164](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971019_Review_of_Converting_California_Indians_and_Franciscans_in_the_Missions_by_James_A_Sandos_Indigenous_Nations_Journal_2008_pp_161-164)
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266971019_Review_of_Converting_California_Indians_and_Franciscans_in_the_Missions_by_James_A_Sandos_Indigenous_Nations_Journal_2008_pp_161-164

Nature Notes du Jour

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

Winter brings super low tides, so head out to Refugio State Beach and explore the *tidepools!*

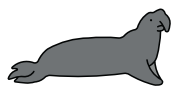
- 12/12 Tues. 3:40pm -1.2 ft.
- 12/13 Wed. 4:23pm -1.3 ft.
- 12/24 Sun. 2:34pm -1.2 ft.
- 12/25 Mon. 3:15pm -1.3 ft.
- 12/26 Tues. 3:55pm -1.3 ft.
- 1/9 Tues. 2:29pm -1.4 ft.
- 1/10 Wed. 3:29pm -1.7 ft.
- 1/11 Thur. 4:09pm -1.8 ft.
- 1/22 Mon. 2:28pm -1.1 ft.
- 1/23 Tues. 3:06pm -1.2 ft.
- 1/24 Wed. 3:41pm -1.2 ft.
- 2/6 Tues. 1:49pm -1.1 ft.
- 2/7 Wed. 2:29pm -1.5 ft.
- 2/8 Thur. 3:06pm -1.7 ft.
- 2/9 Fri. 3:43 pm -1.7 ft.



Gray whale migration peaks are December (southbound) and March (northbound). Grays have the longest migration of any animal! Book an excursion on the *Condor Express* (Santa Barbara) or with *Island Packers* (Ventura). Get up-close and personal!



Elephant seals:
Jan-Feb is great for seeing moms and pups, with males vying for top position. Check them out at Piedras Blancas north of San Simeon.



Monarch Butterflies have returned (Nov-Feb) to the Grove at Pismo State Beach just south of the North Campground (on Hwy 1).



Winter is a great time to get out and explore nature!

News from the Prelado Board

FROM THE DESK OF BERTHA LABEL

Congratulations to newly elected and re-elected Prelado Board Members!

Vice-Chair, Shelly Grand
Directors-at-Large, Doug Bradley and Shannon Steger

Treasurer: Ed Grand
Board members serve for 2 years.

Important dates, mark your calendars:

January
Board meeting: Jan. 27, 9am in La Sala

State Park Quarterly Volunteer Meeting: Jan. 27, 10am in La Sala

February
Board meeting: Feb. 24, 9am in La Sala

Prelado General Membership meeting and potluck breakfast with introduction of new Board: Feb. 24, 10am in La Sala.

Gift yourself a membership renewal to Prelado! You can do it online at www.lapurisimamission.org, drop it off in the Visitor Center donation box, or mail it in. See the renewal form at the end of this newsletter.

The Influence of Native Americans on the United States

BY MOLLY MACHIN

One thing we do very well at La Purísima Mission is share about the Spanish influence on California. But the contributions of the native peoples are often neglected. To better tell the story of the mission, we need to recognize the huge impact that Native peoples have had on the United States, past and present. It is important to note that the fluid relationships between the native peoples of the Americas and European newcomers was marked by periods of competition and violence as well as cooperation and mutual benefit.

Pre-Columbian America was covered with forests. The world the Europeans came from had been deforested to make way for farms, castle, manor houses and cities. Most colonists came from cities. Our ancestors learned from the Native Americans how to survive in this vastly different environment.

Europeans had to learn to recognize and gather pecans, hickory nuts,



Photo: Fur traders in Canada, 1777. Photo courtesy of WikiCommons.

walnuts, pine nuts, blueberries, cranberries, and maple syrup. They needed to learn how to hunt and fish animals they had never seen before. Native Americans introduced early settlers to crops that had been cultivated for thousands of years such as tomatoes, potatoes, squash, corn, sweet potatoes, beans, peanuts, sunflower seeds, cotton, and tobacco. The Europeans encountered weather they had never experienced. Hurricane, squall, and blizzard are all Native American words. Many settlers adopted local inventions such as snowshoes, kayaks, canoes, toboggans, snow goggles, waterproof ponchos, and parkas.

Many U.S. cities and towns are located at the sight of a previous native settlements. New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles were once thriving Native American populations centers. After the civil war, displaced people fled to the newly opened Arizona Territory. Some settled near the Salt River where they encountered irrigation canals left by the Hohokam civilization. Today, that area is Phoenix, Arizona.

The earliest maps of the Americas were made by explorers and cartographers who wanted to convey ownership of the “newly discovered” land. Cities and provinces along the coasts have names like Georgia, Maryland, New Scotland (Nova Scotia), and New England. As settlers moved inland, they needed native guides who used tribal names for places. We find many Native American place names such as the Mississippi River, Lake Tahoe, and the Appalachian Mountains. *El Capitán* in Yosemite is

translated from the Paiute word *Tote-ack-ah-noo-la* meaning “captain’s peak.” Twenty-six of the fifty states have names derived from Native American words. *Nebraska* comes from the Omaha language *ni-bthaska* meaning “flat river.” *Iowa* comes from the Siouan word for “beautiful land.”

From the beginning, fur trading was the most lucrative business in the New World. Native American men trapped the animals, women processed the skins, and the pelts were given to a fur trader in exchange for goods from Europe. An extensive network of trading posts and forts developed to move goods to port cities, like New York.

Between 1600 and 1800, millions of beaver, deer, bison, seal, moose, bear, and otter pelts were shipped all over the world. The fur trade was the economic driver of the early American economy. Fur fortunes built New York City and financed subsequent industrialization of the East Coast. American prosperity was born in the forests through the effort of native American women and men. Native Americans not only introduced Europeans to the physical world of the Americas, they exposed them to new ways of



Photo: The fur traders. Photo courtesy of WikiCommons.

thinking. The word *caucus* is derived from the Algonquin *caucauas*. The idea of making decisions by consensus was completely foreign to Europeans whose only experience was with authoritarian institutions. The Taino word *cacique* means “woman leader.” Europeans were surprised to encounter women in leadership. Many of the tribes the newcomers encountered were hierarchical but others displayed an equality they had never seen. In Europe, the poor lived in wood and mud homes while the upper classes had large stone structures filled with art. The 600 stone dwellings of the Anasazi tell a different story. There is no indication of a wide range of standard of living. Remnants of fine pottery, weaving and baskets are found throughout the community. Early explorers and settlers chose to believe that America was “virgin land, free for the taking.” They did not acknowledge the 8-12 million people living here at the time. It is important that we acknowledge the impact of Native Americans past, present and future.



Photo: *Fur traders in Canada, 1777*. Photo courtesy of WikiCommons.

Sources:

[Native Roots, How the Indians Enriched America](#), Jack Weatherford, Fawcett

Books, New York 1901.

[Population History of Indigenous People](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_history_of_the_Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Population_history_of_the_Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas

[English words from Indigenous](#)

[Languages of the Americas](#),

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_words_from_Indigenous_languages_of_the_Americas

[The Economy of New England](#),

<https://www.ouramericanrevolution.org/index.cfm/page/view/m0074#:~:text=Fish%20was%20the%20area%27s%20most,sent%20US%20Place%20Names%20After%20Royalty,0to%20the%20West%20Indies.>

[US Place Names After Royalty](#),

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_places_in_the_United_States_named_after_royalty

[North American Fur Trade](#),

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_American_fur_trade#:~:text=The%20trade%20was%20initiated%20mainly,to%20coast%20and%20into%20more

[Do We Have the History of Native](#)

[Americans Backward?](#) November 7, 2022.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/11/14/do-we-have-the-history-of-native-americans-backward-indigenous-continent#:~:text=Some%20of%20these%20societies%20were,Puebloan%20cultures%20in%20the%20Southwest.>

Welcome to Team Purísima

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

There are two new friendly faces here at the mission. Joining the Maintenance crew are Mike Bechatel and John Sachs. Mike (here about a month) has been working on the Channel Coast District and John (here about 5 months) most recently on the Oceano Dunes District. Both are permanent Maintenance Workers and are welcomed additions to our mission. Be sure to say “hi” when you see them about their duties.



Photo: Maintenance Workers Mike Bechatel, Cody Stevens, and John Sachs welcome students to a recent Student Learning History Day. Photo by Michele Jimenez-Holtz

Finding the Way

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

A most interesting person with a zest for life and adventure, that's what you'll encounter in Elisabeth Lewis. A docent since 2017, she always wanted to get to know mission history better and after retirement, she decided to become a docent. Some of her favorite things to do at the mission? "I have walked pretty much all the trails and continue to do so. I feel it is a great and safe place to exercise." When asked what she enjoys most about being a docent she shared, "I can welcome people from all over the world at the Visitor Center. I also enjoy teaching 4th graders and adults about corn grinding at all the events."

Elisabeth is very gifted; she greets everyone with a big smile, shares her knowledge and is multi-lingual which is quite beneficial at the mission. She speaks German, Portuguese, Spanish, English and some French. She's also quite the world traveler. "While living in Brazil I visited Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. I have also visited Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico and Puerto Rico. In Europe I have



Photo submitted: Elisabeth on El Camino.

been to Austria, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom."

She shared a piece of wisdom, "When we have a goal and work at achieving it, we succeed." We find a way, but always with help. That's what she shared about her recent pilgrimage on *El Camino de Santiago* in Spain. El Camino, the Way of St. James (Santiago in Spanish), is a network of ancient pilgrim routes across Europe and culminates at his tomb in Santiago de Compostela, Spain.



Photo submitted. The shell is the iconic symbol of El Camino. Church of Santiago de Compostela on the left and the cross of St. James on the right.

The history of El Camino goes back to the 9th century, 814 AD, with the discovery of the tomb of the evangelical apostle of the Iberian Peninsula. It has become a pilgrimage point of the European continent. Along the pilgrimage route, hospitals, churches, monasteries, abbeys, and towns grew. By the 14th century, the pilgrimage decayed brought about by wars, epidemics, and natural catastrophes. A resurgence of El Camino began in the 19th century and continues today with the acknowledgement of its spiritual value.

Photo submitted. The iconic El Camino shell symbol with traditional talavera art.



St. James is a symbol of the courage that inspires us to have hope and strength in the face of anything we endure in life. Historically, St. James was the first cousin of Jesus; his mother Salome was the sister of Mary. He was also the first of the apostles to be martyred in 44AD. I asked Elisabeth how she decided to do El Camino. She became aware of the hike through a friend who was collecting information about it and trying to get people together to do it. He invited friends from Illinois and opened up the trip to others. An avid hiker, Elisabeth thought it would be cool to do and a challenge. She's done a portion of the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada.

Planning for the trip took about a year. Her friend coordinated the logistics through a company in Spain. There are many routes to take and the 15-member group chose *El Camino del Norte* starting in Ribadeo. The northern route eventually joins the more popular (and busier) French route. The trip was all pre-paid and included breakfast, lodging, and transportation of luggage. The trip began on September 17-25 over nine days.



Photo submitted. Hikers along El Camino.

Along the way she met many interesting people, many of whom were very happy, relaxed, and enjoyed themselves. At the end of the pilgrimage, her group had a full day in Santiago de Compostela highlighted by a special noontime mass in the church. The monks filled a huge incense holder and swing it back and forth during the service. All hikers receive a certificate and carry a Camino “passport” book along the way.



Photo submitted. El Camino “peregrino” passport book.



Photo submitted. Completed passport of the “Peregrino.”

When asked about the personal significance for her, Elisabeth shared that God’s presence was with her all the time, answering her prayers for enough energy and stamina to do every day’s hike. God supplied her every need possible and she never hiked alone. Someone from the group was always hiking next to her. She felt very comfortable with the group and felt very much appreciated. She was always



well-equipped with first aid supplies, offering moleskin or a knee brace when needed. The hike itself affirmed to her that God is always with us.

I asked if her life perspective changed as a result of the pilgrimage. She said it hadn’t but she enjoyed meeting so many people on the hike from all over the world. She witnessed how all were looking for a meaning in their lives and seeking peace in their lives. She dreams every night now about the many experiences she had. Along the way, everyone greeted each other with, “Buen Camino!” The greeting is not just about hiking the route but a metaphor about living a good life, and the courage to have hope and strength. *Buen Camino!*



Photo submitted. Trail marker. One side is Mary, the other of Jesus.



Photo submitted. Elisabeth has reached her destination.

A Bench in Memory

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

John Littlejohn has been busy constructing beautiful memorial benches for Emilie Galvan and Moises Solís. He’s grateful to Shyra Liguori for providing historical records to aid in their construction. You can find Emilie’s bench near the padre’s fountain and Moises’ bench just outside of the blacksmith shop.



Photo: John at Emilie’s memorial bench.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Bring Back the Fire

BY MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ

In the last issue of *Noticias*, I touched on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). This time, I'll focus on how that knowledge has influenced public land managers and the role of fire in protecting ecosystems.

TEK, also called by other names including Indigenous Knowledge or Native Science, refers to the evolving knowledge acquired by indigenous and local peoples over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment. The knowledge is specific to a location and it explains the relationships between plants, animals, landscapes, celestial elements, and events. It also includes those relationships of peoples to the environment along social, cultural, and spiritual elements. These extensive observations of nature and of the land span over generations and are the result of acquired knowledge through direct contact and experience. Historically, the western perspective of fire has been one of fear, something that must be

controlled, put out, eradicated. The Great Fire of 1910 helped shape public land management practices that resulted in total suppression of all fire and the 10am Rule. Fueled by dry fuels conditions and winds, the fire burned over 3 million acres in northern Idaho and western Montana. Towns and homes were destroyed, people perished. Sound familiar? The Forest Service instituted the 10am Rule of total suppression of all fires by 10am the next day. Some of those policies and practices are still in effect today. The result is over 100 years of fuels accumulation. Today, it is not uncommon to see fires of the magnitude of 1910.

Cultural burning by native peoples was observed by early European settlers, but primarily to improve forage conditions for free-ranging cattle and for visibility and access for hunting. For millennia, the native use of fire helped to clear areas for plant growth and safe travel. It was used to regenerate plants necessary for food and cultural resources and was known to be beneficial to animal species who foraged through the areas.

“According to Frank Kanawha Lake, a research ecologist with the USDA Forest Service, and a wildland firefighter of Karuk descent, ‘Cultural burning links back to the tribal philosophy of fire as

medicine. When you prescribe it, you're getting the right dose to maintain the abundance of productivity of all ecosystem services to support the ecology in your culture.’ (Roos, 2021).” What native peoples understand is that we live in a world of fire-adapted ecosystems. It wasn't until the 1930's to 1950's that the Forest Service and National Park Service began to consider prescribed burning as a useful management tool for other than wildlife. Little attention was given to its benefits, nor did the agencies have sufficient manpower available to help in the efforts. Fear undoubtedly played a role as well. So much effort was exerted to prevent any wildfires from occurring that resistance prevailed. Eventually, more prescribed burning was done. But not enough. There is still much more work to be done.

There is great knowledge to be acquired through active partnerships between native tribes and public land management agencies. Today, more of these partnerships are taking place throughout California. The Yurok, Hoopa, Karuk, Miwok, Chumash, Western Mono, Paiute, Southern Sierra Miwuk



Photo: The Big Fire of 1910.



Photo courtesy National Park Service, Sara Rx Fire.:



Photo courtesy US Forest Service, Red Feather Rx Fire.

just to name a few, continue to utilize culture burning to revitalize the land. Cultural burning has the intent of returning to make use of the land again and to restore the land, resources, and water. Thus, bringing it back to where it can reproduce on its own. On the other hand, prescribed burning is about focusing on acreage and fuel reduction while relying on natural features or previous fires to control future spread. “As Tribal landowners we have worked to improve the health of the forest on our own ancestral homelands. We support these types of fuel-reduction projects as it helps reduce wildfire risk and improves forest health,” said Dirk Charley, Dunlap Band of Mono Indians Tribal Liaison.

“But today’s “age of the megafire” can be an equally historic catalyst toward a new future for our forests, one that more closely mimics nature and the practices of those who lived closest to the land. That is how we will fix America’s forests.” -- *Author unknown.*



Photo: Members of Yosemite Fire look on as the Southern Sierra Miwuk engage in a ceremony and traditional methods to ignite the prescribed fire. Photo by Brent Johnson, NPS..

Sources:

The Big Burn of 1910:

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5444731.pdf

Indigenous Fire Practices:

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fire/indigenous-fire-practices-shape-our-land.htm>

Fire is Medicine:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/nov/21/wildfire-prescribed-burns-california-native-americans>

To learn more about TEK and fire, watch these videos:

BIA fire video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUPXtKeOHu0&t=92s>

Tribes reclaim traditional use of fire on land:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_joD4RxrX8

Congratulations to New Docents

BY KRISTEN MCNALLY

Congratulations to La Purísima Mission's newest group of California State Park Volunteers! Please welcome Scott, CathyJo, April, Anne, and Brett to the team. The interpretive department at La Purísima Mission SHP is excited to welcome five new volunteers and look forward to their additions to the events and programs of the mission. Each new volunteer brings a wealth of experience and background to the volunteer community at La Purísima Mission SHP. During the six-week volunteer training, new and current volunteers had the opportunity to participate in presentations from Tom Lopez a Northern Chumash descendent, and author of Land of Our Ancestors Gary Robinson. The training also included presentations from myself (Kristen) on interpretation and the Civilian Conservation Corps and led a tour of the mission. Thank you to all the new volunteers for their dedication, hard work, and passion in becoming a volunteer at La Purísima Mission SHP. Many thanks to current volunteers who helped support the volunteer training. Congratulations!



Photo submitted (right): Scott, CathyJo, April, Anne, Brett, and Kristen.

Calendar: Subject to Change

	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
Board Meeting: 9am, La Sala		27	24
Founding Day Mass: 12 noon, Church	8		
Founding Day Concert: 7pm, Church	8		
General Membership Meeting: 10am, La Sala (and Potluck Breakfast)			24
Last Day of the Year Hike	31		
Spring edition of <i>Noticias</i> article deadline			1
State Park Quarterly Docent Meeting		27	
Student Learning History Days	14	18	22
Station Tours		11 & 25	8 & 29
Student Guided Tours	Wednesdays at 10am		

Additional Park Interpretive Programs and Special Events will be announced via email by Kristen McNally.

Stay Connected!

Don't forget to check out the many excellent park resources for news and videos. Please share with family and friends.

- [La Purísima Mission State Historic Park](#)
- [LPM State Park Facebook page](#)
- [LPM YouTube page](#)
- [LPM Virtual Tour](#)
- [Prelado Facebook page](#)
- [Prelado website](#)

A Little Trivia: *Prelado de los Tesoros* roughly translates to *Keepers of the Treasures*.

Our mission: We are a non-profit, 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation. Our members volunteer their time and talent to assist the staff of La Purísima Mission State Historic Park in preserving history and providing quality educational programs for park visitors.





Renew your Prelado Membership today!



Name(s):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

____ Annual Active Membership (\$10.00)

____ Annual Supporting Membership (\$25.00)

____ Lifetime Membership (\$500.00)

____ Donation (\$ _____)

Record Donation in Honor or in Memory of : _____

Notify:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Mail and make check payable to: Prelado de los Tesoros, 2295 Purisima Rd, Lompoc, CA 93436-9647 (Attn:Membership)

From the Editors' Desk

BY MICHELE PITTENGER, KAREN HILL,
MICHELE JIMENEZ-HOLTZ, SUSAN LUNA

Thanks to all who submitted articles and photos for the winter edition. In an effort to reduce cost and paper, we send *Noticias* via email and via USPS mail only to those requesting such. Send a note to:

noticias@lapurisimamission.org

Noticias article submission guidelines:

- 600 words or less if possible, but longer articles may be submitted
- Please only submit photos of docents, volunteers, or others for which you have obtained their written permission
- Hi-resolution photos only
- Articles may be edited to fit format

Next deadline: **February 1**

Send to:

noticias@lapurisimamission.org

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Prelado de los Tesoros
La Purísima Mission SHP
2295 Purisima Rd.
Lompoc, CA 93436

(805) 733-3713

www.lapurisimamission.org

[www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/PreladodelosTesoros/)

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Photo: La Purísima Mission at night, 2017. Photo by Madison Alexander.