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**Our Traditional Territory**, known as *Popelouchom* in Mutsun, stretches from Año Nuevo south along the west slope of the Santa Cruz Mountains to Monterey Bay and the Salinas River. It includes the entire Pajaro and San Benito watersheds, encompassing all of San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties, southern Santa Clara County, and eastern Monterey County.

**OUR DIRECTIVE**

WE ARE AMAH MUTSUN.  
WE ARE OF THE LANDS KNOWN TO US AS POPELOUCHOM: HOME TO OUR FOUR-LEGGED, WINGED, FINNED, AND PLANT KIN; THEY HAVE PROVIDED US WITH ALL THAT WE NEEDED FOR MILLENNIA. WE WILL CARE FOR THEM. RESTING PLACE OF THOSE THAT CAME BEFORE US AND CRADLE TO THOSE YET TO COME; THEY ARE SACRED. WE WILL PROTECT THEM. WE WERE PLACED HERE FOR THESE REASONS. THESE ARE OUR OBLIGATIONS TO CREATOR. WE WILL HONOR THEM.

**Native History at Coast Dairies**

Although Coast Dairies has been home to Native people for thousands of years, the cultural resources associated with their deep history on the landscape have been the subject of much less research than resources associated with later occupation by Euro-Americans. Despite the lack of prior study, we think that Coast Dairies has tremendous potential to teach us about Native people's relationship with the landscape through archaeological and ecological research. From vegetation type surveys of the property, it is also clear that Coast Dairies contains extensive and diverse ethnobiological resources which are culturally important to contemporary tribes.

The **Cotoni tribe** stewarded Coast Dairies' landscape at the time of Spanish colonization. These speakers of the Awaswas language were brought into Mission Santa Cruz in the 1790s, where they suffered greatly from disease, confinement, and mistreatment. Through the 1800s, their descendants formed emergent tribal affiliations with other Native people brought into the missions. Their traditional territory is now associated with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Their legacy persists on the landscape through archaeological sites and remnants of the native vegetation stands they tended for their food, crafting, and construction needs. Because there is little historical documentary information about the Cotoni people, the Native cultural resources at Coast Dairies may be our only window into their traditional cultural practices and daily lives.

**Archaeological Resources**

- Currently, four Native archaeological sites have been documented on BLM lands at Coast Dairies. However, very little formal archaeological survey has been completed (2% of the 5800 acres), and we believe there may be many unidentified archaeological sites on the property.
- At one site, dozens of Native burials were disturbed by road construction in the early 1900s. This site, sacred to the Amah Mutsun, must be protected.
- Another site contains both Native and Colonial period artifacts. If Native people lived at this place during the 1800s, it may teach us how they coped with colonial pressures at a time when few people recorded Native histories.

**Ethnobiological Resources**

- Coast Dairies contains hundreds of acres of central coast live oak and mixed evergreen woodlands. These vegetation types provide an abundance of Native food resources in the form of acorns, bay nuts, hazelnuts, buckeye, and many types of berries.
- There are limited stands of native coastal prairies in Coast Dairies, which may be expanded through restoration work. This is a rare vegetation type with a high proportion of native rather than exotic grasses and forbs. Research suggests this vegetation type was expanded and maintained by Native people through regular landscape burning, producing seed foods for people and forage for animals.
- Coast Dairies contains a high diversity of native plant communities, with dozens of native plant species traditionally used for crafting, medicine, and ceremony. Some of these plants are difficult for tribes to access elsewhere, thus Coast Dairies can play an important role in ensuring that Native people are able to continue their traditional cultural practices by providing access to these resources.

## The Amah Mutsun Land Trust

In 2005, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Council agreed that that we must find a way to re-engage in stewardship of the lands and waters of Popeloutchum even though we owned no land. We began by building partnerships and alliances with public land owners and educational institutions. In 2013, we established the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) to provide land conservation and stewardship within our traditional Tribal territory. Our AMLT is being fostered with organizational support from Sempervirens Fund and financial assistance from the Christensen Foundation and the Kalliopeia Foundation.

**Our Vision is of a future** where our people, and all people, may once again drink safely from clean and clear flowing waters; tend and gather from vigorous populations of plants; hunt from strong herds of elk and deer; harvest salmon and abalone from healthy fisheries; behold self-sustaining populations of condor and eagle soaring the ridges and valleys; witness the sky darken with waterfowl rising off full lakes and vibrant wetlands; be assured that those who have passed may rest in peace; and know our connection to the land because we live connected to it.

**Our goals are to restore** and apply the ecological knowledge gained over 10,000 years of indigenous presence to issues of ecological conservation, resource enhancement, and sustainability in the contemporary

### Our commitments

- To be stewards of the land, water, and marine environments and to look after the native species that Creator entrusted to our care.
- To work in collaborative partnership with the community to conserve, protect, and heal Mother Earth within the lands of Popeloutchum.
- To restore and enhance the indigenous knowledge of our ancestors and apply this knowledge directly to the land through stewardship practices, sustainable harvesting, and management techniques, and cultural use of natural resources to maintain healthy and diverse ecosystems long into the future.
- To cultivate relationships and create opportunities for our people to hunt and harvest culturally significant resources in order to reinforce and teach our traditions.
- To facilitate development of partnerships and agreements with those who wish to protect the cultural and natural resources upon the lands under their care.
- To maintain confidentiality in assisting partnering landowners and land managers in their conservation objectives.
- To educate, consult, and partner with the public, land conservation organizations, public agencies, and private landowners on native land stewardship principles and practices.
- To incorporate adaptation strategies that address climate change and promote resilience for humans and native species alike.
- To maintain a professional, effective, and efficient organization based on cultural values and governed with excellence and accountability.

### Our partners and allies

The Amah Mutsun value the great work being done by like-minded individuals and organizations in service of our lands and our people. Wherever possible, the Tribe seeks to partner with these groups to accomplish shared goals. Some of our partners include:

#### Governments and Agencies

- California Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- National Park Service
- Santa Clara County Parks
- City of Santa Cruz
- City of San Juan Bautista
- Pinnacles Partnership
- Canada de los Osos Ecological Reserve

#### Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations

- Sempervirens Fund
- Bay Area Open Space Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- Land Trust Alliance
- Native Land Trust Alliance
- Land Trust of Santa Cruz County
- Pie Ranch

#### Educational Institutions

- UC Berkeley
- UC Santa Cruz
- UC Davis
- Stanford University
- Cabrillo College
- De Anza College
- SF State University
- California Academy of Sciences
- Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology
- Oakland Museum of California
- Exploratorium

world. We want to provide a hopeful and healthful future for our children; protect the sacred sites and resting spirits of our ancestors; access, manage, and harvest the bounty of these lands that sustain the people spiritually and physically; repair and make resilient the natural systems that modern ways have disrupted; integrate traditional knowledge and methods into the science of conservation; guide decisions that affect our lands and well-being; and reunite our people upon Tribally-owned homelands.

**Indigenous knowledge and stewardship** are integrated into all phases of work by the AMLT. Our belief is that there is both a spiritual and ecological basis to vegetation management. The health of the ecosystem is enhanced and maintained through burning, sowing, tilling, and other physical types of indigenous land management techniques. But ecosystem health is also fostered through Amah Mutsun ceremony including, singing, dancing, prayers, gratitude, and stories. These essential rituals speak to the spirit in all life and renew the earth. They also are a way of respecting our ancestors. We also honor our ancestors by restoring long-term relationships with plants, animals, rocks, and water through traditional uses and spiritual rituals on the landscape.



Photo by Sara Reid

*We seek to return a rich suite of native plants and animals to grasslands in our traditional territory*



Photo by Rick Flores

*In December 2011, the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band in collaboration with Pinnacles National Park carried out the first cultural burn on public land in their territory. A stand of deergrass, traditionally used in basketry, was burned to stimulate new growth.*



Photo by Rick Flores

*Native plant knowledge is shared with Tribal members and the public at the UCSC Arboretum.*



Photo courtesy of Midpen Open Space District

*Our creation story tells us that Mount Umunhum is the origin of our people.*



Photo by Chuck Striplen

*Results of collaborative ecological and archaeological research at Quiroste Valley Cultural Preserve are guiding cultural management of the landscape by AMLT today.*