



NATIVE POWER: PROTECTING OUR HOMELANDS

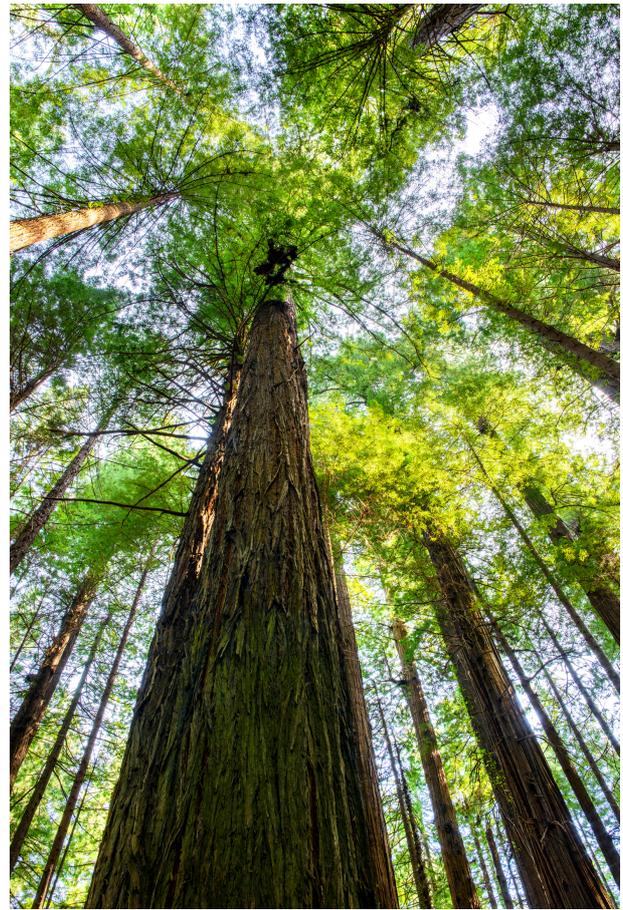


Imagine California. Do you see ocean waves crashing against the cliffs? Or do you see redwood trees as tall as skyscrapers? Or long, rocky beaches, rivers, or cities? American Indian Tribes have taken care of this land since **time immemorial**. They have a deep connection with the ocean, plants and animals.

Tribes used to live in harmony with nature. Then, European **settlers** abused the land and the Native people. Many Native people were killed, died from disease, or made slaves. All had to leave behind their homes to live on **reservations**.

The Sinkyone (pronounced sinky-own) Tribe used to live in California's redwood forest region. Like many other tribes, the Sinkyone Peoples faced **genocide** by settlers. They were no longer able to protect their homelands. For a long time, settlers came and cut down the Redwoods and sold the wood. The Redwood forest is an important **ecosystem**. Cutting the trees hurt the plants and animals that relied on them to live.

Despite this sad history, the Sinkyone have passed down their traditional ways.



Once again they are fighting to protect their homelands. They bought a lot of their land back. They are now protecting the trees, salmon, and wildlife.

The Sinkyone have other tribes who are helping them. This group of tribes is called The InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. It is a group of ten tribes. See where the ten member tribes live on the map. This group helps protect Sinkyone lands. They also work to defend, strengthen and honor **traditional** knowledge and cultural ways.



There are ten Tribal leaders on the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council. Nine are women and one is a man. They have been successful in fighting for their **rights** to the land. They have strong leadership skills. Cooperation is also very important. They must work together to reach their goals. They have made friendships with both Native and non-Native groups.

The council's first victory came in 1997. They bought 4,000 acres of their land back. Elementary schools are 10 acres, so that's equal to about 400 schools! The Council continues to gain control of their homelands. They partner with other groups who want to protect our planet. Together, they created the world's second largest system of **Marine Protected Areas**. Native peoples near the ocean have to protect the plants and animals of the sea, too.

There is still much work to do. There are still settlers controlling the homelands of **Tribal Nations**. The InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council must have respectful discussions with these settlers. They must teach them how to live in harmony with the land and sea. All people are connected to the land and sea.

"As an Indian woman and mother, I have heard and felt the cries, and also the happy times, of our **ancestors**. The suffering of our Mother Earth, the ocean and all our animal and plant relations calls out to us."

-Priscilla Hunter, Chairwoman of the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council.



time immemorial

A time that was so long ago people are uncertain of how long ago it was

settler

Someone who moves to another place and plans to stay there

reservation

The land that belongs to a Tribal Nation

genocide

The crime of killing many people who are apart of a group

ecosystem

A home to living and non-living things that interact with one another

traditional

Relating to a way of doing something that has been passed down

rights

Basic needs that everyone should have

Marine Protected Area

Areas of the ocean that have laws protecting the ecosystem

Tribal Nation

A tribe that is has the power to make their own laws over their land and people

ancestor

A family member that came way before you



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What did you learn?

How long did the Sinkyone people live in the Redwood forest region?

Why were they faced to move away from their homeland?

Circle the value that best fits each sentence:

"The InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council must *teach* settlers how to live in harmony with the land and sea."

respect

reciprocity

relationships

"American Indian Tribes have a deep *connection* with the ocean, plants and animals."

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"The InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council works to *defend, strengthen and honor* traditional knowledge and cultural ways."

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What did you learn?

Answer Sheet

How long did the Sinkyone people live in the Redwood forest region?

"American Indian Tribes have taken care of this land since time immemorial."

Why were they faced to move away from their homeland?

"European settlers abused the land and the Native people. Many Native people were killed, died from disease, or made slaves. All had to leave behind their homes to live on reservations."

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