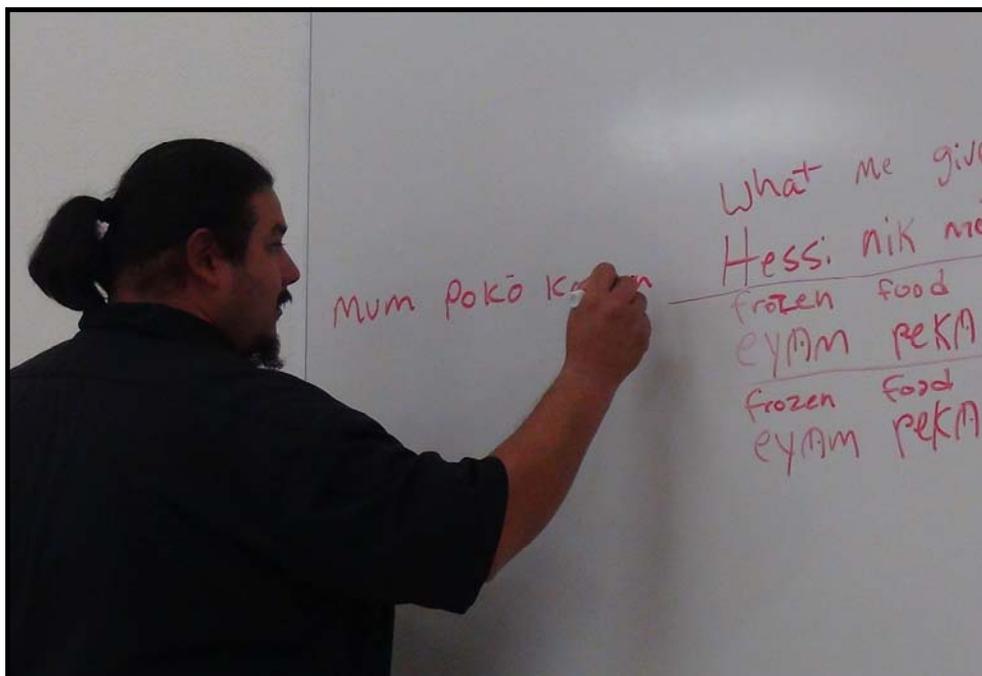




The Dirt

SIR Newsletter Insert
November 2015

*Cultural and Environmental News
brought to you by the Susanville Indian Rancheria
Natural Resources Department (NRD)*



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Pictured above...Language Instructor Danny Manning writes in Maidu on the white board during a Tosidum class at the SIR Resource Center.

Everyone is welcome to attend Tosidum (Mountain Maidu) Language Classes sponsored by the SIR Cultural Committee

WHEN: Most Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: SIR Resource Center at 735 Joaquin Street



Meet the NeRDs...

Natural Resources Department Mission Statement:

To assess, protect and enhance the tribal and environmental resources (culture, language, land, air, water) on the ancestral homelands of the tribes and bands of SIR in order to maintain a healthy community and to manage for multiple land uses.

In October, the three-year ANA grant for language revitalization of the Mountain Maidu language ended which meant we lost the funding source for long-time NeRD and Language Program Coordinator, Donna Clark.

We are so grateful for Donna over the life of the grant and are lucky to have her continue sharing her knowledge and expertise by serving as a volunteer for the SIR Language Program.

The SIR will be applying for another ANA language grant in March 2016!

If you have any questions or comments about the stories or programs in this newsletter, please contact the writers:

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UPDATE! Elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) seedlings and other native plant seeds including spring tea (*Monardella odoratissima*) were planted by NRD staff this fall on the Cradle Valley property. These plants are in addition to the elderberry seedlings planted earlier this year by tribal youth and made possible with funding from a NRCS Conservation Stewardship Contract.

Native plants are important for cultural values as well as for pollinators and wildlife. Stay tuned for more photos and see how much they grow!



SIR Natural Resources Department
735 Joaquin Street, Susanville, CA 96130

Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste...

SIR NRD just wrapped up its *Appliance Collection Event* for SIR tribal members. We would like to thank everyone who participated.

From August through October, the NRD solicited for used, broken and unwanted appliances by offering free pick up, removal and recycling.

Totals from the 2015 Collection Event were:

Washers and Dryers: 19

Refrigerators and Freezers: 6

Water Heaters: 1

Microwave: 1

A TOTAL of 27 appliances were collected and recycled!



The NRD welcomes Miguel Nunez, Recycling Technician, to the department. Miguel has been working hard to keep recyclable items out of the landfill.

Washers and dryers were hauled to Bullseye Recycling Center so the metal and parts could be recycled.

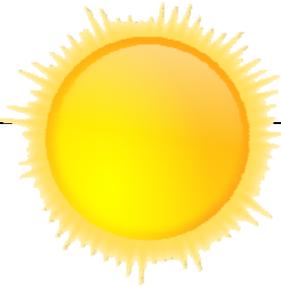
For SIR tribal members who have left over paint laying around, the NRD will be holding a Used Paint Collection Event.
Look for information about this and other household hazardous waste collection events at the Tribal Office and in your mailbox soon!



Environmental News...

*As part of our Climate Change Series,
in this issue we are discussing WINTER WEATHER PATTERNS!*

“Mother Earth is facing some tough issues including an ever-expanding human population, increased development and a changing climate which can be attributed to humans. Some of the effects of climate change that can be seen in our region are the loss of snowpack, prolonged drought, and a greater risk of catastrophic fire.”



“Godzilla El Niño”

“Strongest El Niño on Record”

“Massive El Niño is Too Big to Fail”

How will El Niño Impact Our Winter Weather?

Media hype of this year’s El Niño has filled the news in recent months with dramatic headlines and references to powerful storms. But what is the truth behind the tag lines? And what is it likely to mean for Susanville and Northern California?

Here are a few clarifying points....

Myth: El Niño is a single large storm.

Truth: El Niño is a change to the weather pattern. El Niño is caused by the warming of the ocean surface along the equator in the Pacific Ocean. This warm water interacts with the atmosphere and changes the Jet Stream, which in turn influences the path of winter storms.

Myth: Weather forecasters know when and where big snowstorms are going to hit.

Truth: Individual storms (including where snowstorms will hit, snow totals or extreme cold events) are not predictable more than a week in advance.

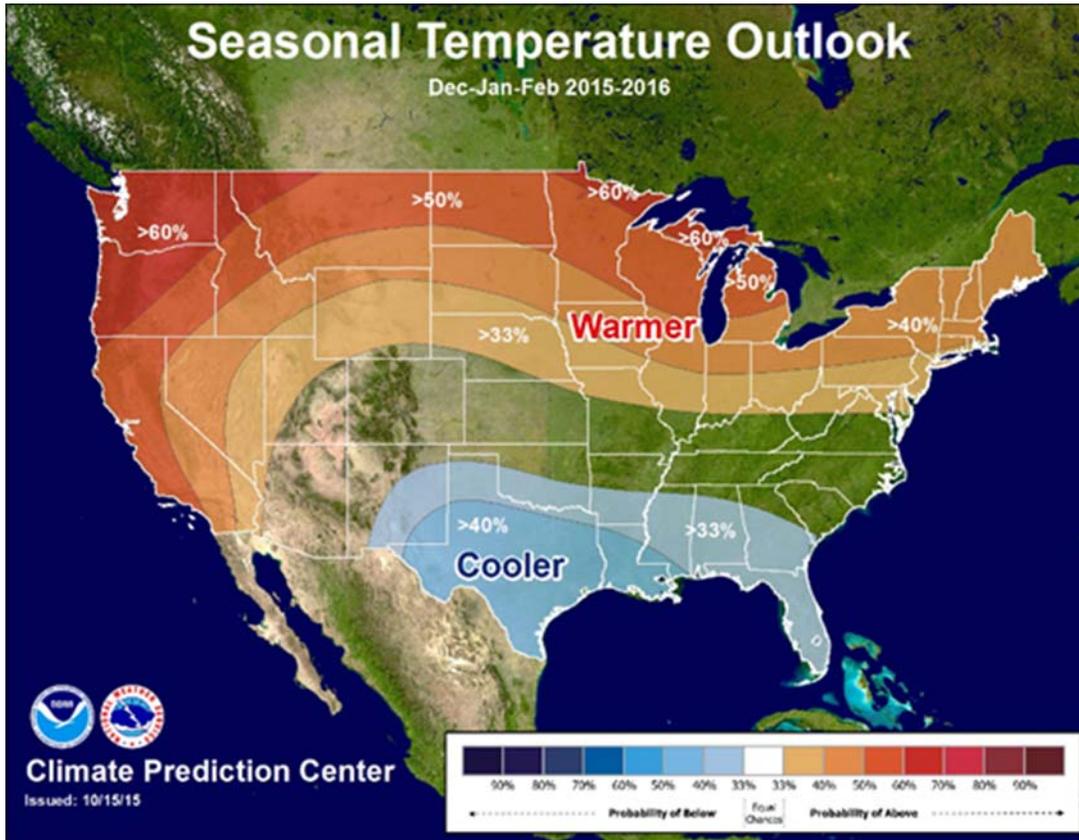
However, general weather patterns for this winter are predicted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’s Climate Prediction Center.

The predictions that affect the Susanville area include:

- Above average temperatures for the western United States.
- Above average precipitation for central and southern California.

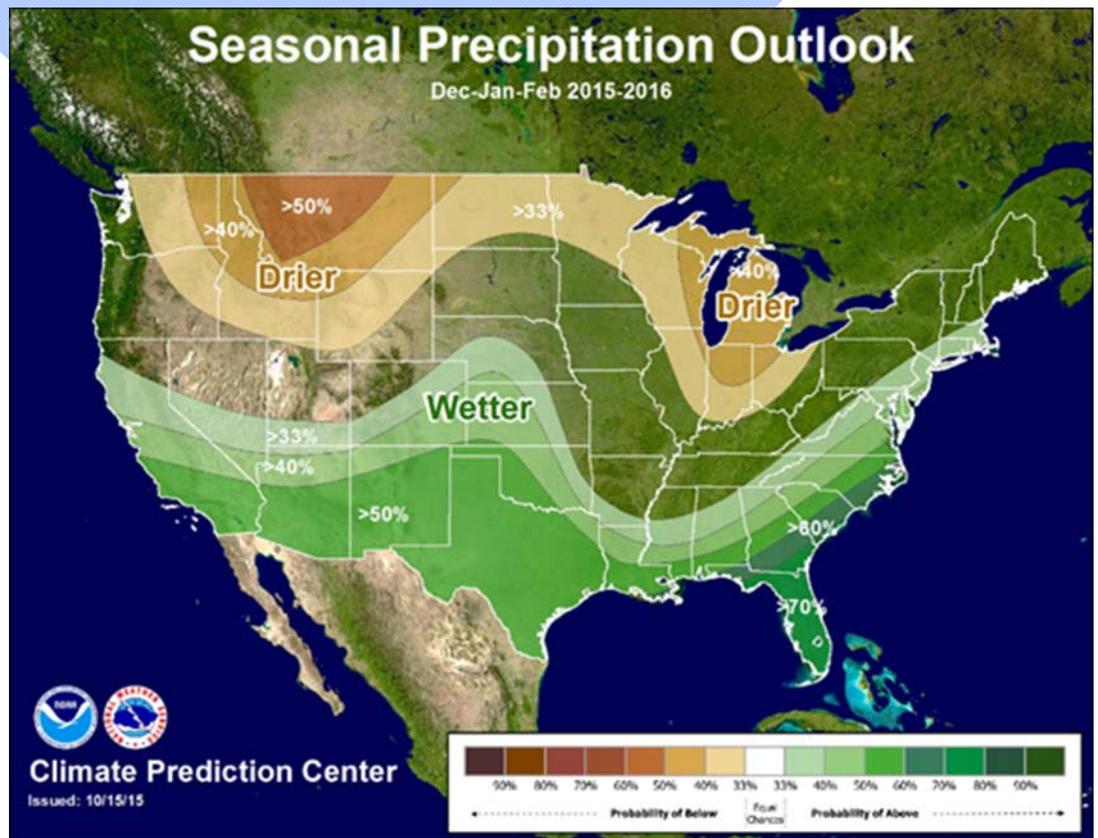
**To get a better picture of our area in relation to the remaining United States,
see the SEASONAL OUTLOOK maps on page 5.**

Winter Weather Predictions...



Above average temperatures are forecasted for Winter 2015-2016 for the Susanville area. Winter days and nights may be warmer than usual for this time of year!

Above average precipitation is expected for the Susanville area, but not as much as in southern California and the southern United States.



Cultural Day 2015...

The NRD Tribal Historic Preservation Office is planning a Cultural Day in December.

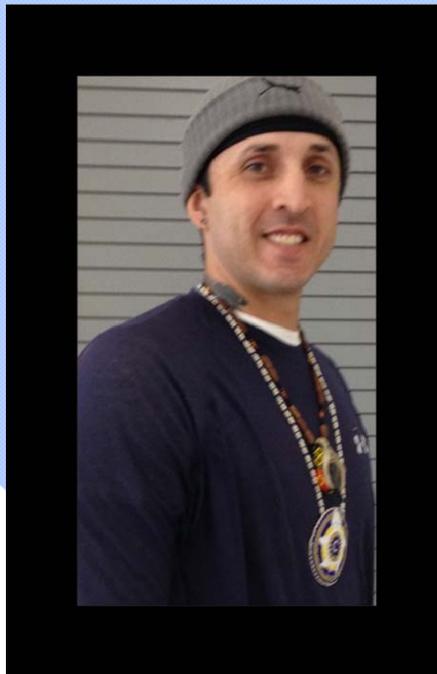
WHEN: Saturday December 12, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WHERE: SIR Resource Center at 735 Joaquin Street

Arrangements are being made for Artists to teach a Native American craft, game, song, language or anything that is culturally fitting. There will be a raffle drawing for those who stay and participate in the all day event (10:00 AM to 3:30 PM). Children **MUST** be accompanied by an adult. Lunch and snacks will be provided. We will be sending event flyers out in November and hoping for a large turnout!

These pictures are from the 2014 SIR Cultural Day...

Those who attended had a great time and learned more about our culture!



Cultural News from the THPO...



Mountain Meadows Reservoir (MMR) also known as Walker Lake on September 15, 2015

What happened to the water at MMR? Are those dead fish? **YES!** Who is responsible? The State Water Board? The Department of Fish and Wildlife? Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)? No one will take responsibility. Nonchalantly, the three agencies say it's the drought, or someone left the gate open, or it was an accident. It has been over a month and a half and there has been no action. The Susanville Indian Rancheria (SIR) responded to the recent draining of Mountain Meadows Reservoir (MMR), also referred to as Walker Lake in Lassen County, near Westwood, and requested Native American Monitors, security patrol, surveys of the meadow, biological data silt studies, (methyl mercury), habitat, endangered species, wildlife, birds and sensitive plants; and most importantly **Face-to Face Consultation under Executive Order 13175**.

Mountain Meadows was a huge habitation area for Mountain Maidu people. Many traditional villages there were inundated by waters that were dammed by PG&E. During the flooding of the meadow, there were still people living in their homes who were told they would have to leave their homes, meadows and way of life; they were displaced citizens with nowhere to go. Food and medicines were plentiful along with creeks flowing in the meadow for the people and animals. Deer foraged in the meadow and were abundant. There were ducks, geese and Native fish for the taking; keeping our families well fed. The claim that there are no Native fish in MMR is not accurate. There were Native fish in the meadow creeks, streams and MMR. Fish studies conducted by Eckbo, Dean and Williams (EDAW), a company that provides environmental, cultural and consulting services, revealed Rainbow and Brown Trout along with a Native chub. The reeds and tules (used to weave mats) are habitat for the ducks and geese that frequented MMR. We wonder what will happen to them now.

Since habitation areas are uncovered, looters in the area and others from distant places will be stealing and digging up whatever they can. The Native American artifacts that were left behind when the people had to rush away are still there, some under the silt in the meadow. Looters don't care, they rob graves and habitation sites for illegal gains. Items and Human Remains are sold on the black market. Federal and State laws prohibit people from taking artifacts, under the Native American Historic Resource Protection Act (CA), (AB-52), Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA), and the Antiquities Act. It is punishable by law, for destruction or excavation of Native American sites. There should be security available for keeping eyes on the land also. One request was honored; there is now 24 hour, 7 days a week security patrol. We are expecting to set up consultation with PG&E as soon as possible.

Cultural News (continued)...

There are Native birds indigenous to this landscape, including Eagles, Osprey, Flickers, and Willow Fly Catchers, among others that have been affected by the draining of MMR. Threatened and endangered birds and wildlife were not considered in this great debacle. It's bad enough that all of the fish have died. Although it's true that the bass are non-native to the lake, the lake has become a very popular fishing destination for bass fishing. Canoes can no longer cruise the lake admiring the beautiful scenery, wildlife and birds.

SIR THPO Melany Johnson reviewed legal agreements between California Department of Fish and Game and PG&E, made in 1989. The State of California, State Water Resources Control Board signed a 28-page agreement in 1990. When the State Water Board was contacted in October, they stated that they had no jurisdiction over PG&E, and yet the agreement was certified and adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW, formerly DFG) made an appearance on the local news. The gentleman, who spoke on behalf of the DFW, claimed they informed PG&E in August that the lake was getting low. Apparently, no one responded; however, DFW places no fault on anyone.

It appears that PG&E failed to follow its own protocol. The statement issued by PG&E through Jim Nelson, is inadequate in reference to, "The three entities will work closely on an ongoing basis to manage future operations of the Mountain Meadows Reservoir." (PG&E, State Water Regional Control Board, and the DFW) It's inadequate because Tribes were not notified and this is not the first nor only time that we have not been notified. If the three entities are truly concerned for the environment, this tragedy wouldn't have happened. This is an ongoing problem with PG&E. PG&E claims to be environmental stewards of the water and land, stating it's their top priority. When the State Water Regional Control Board was contacted, they declared that they have nothing to do with what PG&E does at MMR. We feel as though it's going to be "swept under the rug", as in past events, such as the Chips Fire that destroyed a Sacred Mountainside in Humbug Valley. Everything that has happened is more than a simple disappointment; it is a serious error. The statement issued by PG&E, lacks sincerity and minimizes this disaster.

What about the status of Lake Almanor? Is Lake Almanor going to suffer the same fate of MMR? As you may know, Big Meadows (under Lake Almanor and the surrounding area) is a huge habitation and traditional village site. The water covered most of the sites, and now some of the areas are being exposed. Understandably, the drought did have impacts on these two reservoirs, however, there seems to be mismanagement of keeping water at least to minimum levels.

We will follow up to make sure the Tribe receives face-to-face consultation.

Our office receives 10 to 20 letters per week inquiring about cultural resources, informing us of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), Environmental Impact Reports (EIR), California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and plans and projects for the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. This is only one part of the THPO duties; however, it is very important. Our office does everything we can to protect ALL Sacred Sites and Cultural Resource areas. Areas of cultural concern include water, air, wildlife, fish, birds, trees, and ethnobotanicals, in addition to artifacts and Native American Human Remains or cemeteries.