

2016 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Project: **Kashaya Pomo Cultural Landscape Project**

Initiated in 2008 and completed in 2015, the Kashaya Pomo Cultural Landscape Project (KPCLP) was a multi-year community based tribal cultural landscape study conducted by Caltrans, the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, California State Parks, and Sonoma State University. With Transportation Enhancement funding, the KPCLP documented the Kashaya Pomo tribal cultural landscape as a living heritage and identified ways to incorporate Kashaya values and stewardship practices into heritage management practices by state agencies. Using more than 100 years of previously documented indigenous and academic scholarship, a collaboratively-developed heritage survey, family narratives, and oral history interviews with tribal scholars, tribal relationships with the landscape at the scale of the community, family, and the individual were documented. Further, understanding of how the Kashaya landscape is maintained as a living heritage at these three different scales became the basis for a culturally appropriate heritage management plan to be used for programmatic consultation between Caltrans, the Kashaya Pomo Tribe, and California State Parks on projects within the Kashaya Pomo tribal cultural landscape for purposes of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and Public Resources Code Sections 5024 and 21074. It is hoped that the KPCLP will serve as an example to be used by others, particularly given changes in CEQA due to Assembly Bill 52. From KPCLP study results, plans for a Kashaya heritage driving tour and walking trail were developed for the enrichment of all those who visit the Sonoma Coast.

All aspects of this study were created in an explicitly collaborative way, making the KPCLP an example of an emerging category of heritage management practice that is based on community engagement. Community engagement projects develop mechanisms for maximizing local community participation in recognizing what are important or significant elements of cultural heritage at the local level. That recognition is then useful for making decisions about how best to conserve, preserve, or manage those heritage elements. In this project, the concept of cultural landscape was used as the principal mechanism for framing both definitions and decision-making.

In the case of the Kashaya, their surrounding cultural landscape served as a critical, key component of a sophisticated social, political, and economic system that they and other groups of indigenous Californians had developed over centuries of increasing social and cultural complexity in the region. With the arrival of Europeans, this same system provided Kashaya ancestors with a key mechanism for negotiating with new cultural "others," as well as maintaining a clear sense of their own identity in a time of rapid change. That same cultural capital continues to be used today, allowing the community to face the kinds of challenges it encounters in current society. This means that the Tribe's cultural landscape continues to serve a critical function for the continued health and well-being of the tribal community. As such, this project is an example of an approach to heritage management that emphasizes living heritage, and the need to maintain Traditional Kashaya places in usable condition.