



# Round Valley Reader



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Past \* Present \* Future \*

February 2, 2024

PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT PRESENT



L-R: Michelle Merrifield, Perry Lincoln, Ernie Lincoln

## PRESENT: Tribal Concerns about The Great Redwood Trail

Written by Michelle Peñaloza

A group of Wailaki Descendants and their allies, working together under the name of Kinest'e Community Coalition, addressed the Great Redwood Trail Agency during public comment at the GRTA Board meeting in Ukiah on January 25th.

From a press release issued by N-Shong Media: "On January 8, the group's attorney, Shannon Wilhite, wrote a letter requesting the Wailakis be added to the GRTA's January agenda to discuss Native concerns about the proposed route of the trail, which winds through the heart of the ancestral territory of several local tribes in the Eel River Canyon. The GRTA denied this request, despite the Agency's repeated assertions that they are taking input from local tribes.

Attorney Wilhite spoke with GRT General Manager Elaine Hogan, who "indicated that anything other than participating in the general public comment period would not be available to us." The ambitious "rails to trails" project involves the defunct North Coast Railroad, which was built in 1914 through an area that had been densely populated by Native communities until settlers perpetrated ethnic cleansing of their villages. Wailaki,

Yuki and other tribal Descendants trace their ancestry to specific sites within the GRT's planned route through the canyon, and they assert that the GRT puts their heritage and culture at risk. In addition to untold historic and sacred sites along the river, the land has diverse uses and cultural meaning for tribal members still living there today. They want to be included and at the table during all phases of planning for the GRT, not just asked to weigh in on a lengthy document after the fact. "The first people of this area are respectfully requesting that they be treated as the original peoples of the land and to give them the respect due," wrote Attorney Wilhite in the letter. "

It is concerning that the GRTA is not actively engaging with these individuals and ensuring the cultural sites will be protected and preserved in a way that honors these people whose land the Trail is on." A number of state and federal laws are in place to protect Native cultural resources, archaeological sites, and even elements of the natural landscape that have cultural significance. As a state agency, the GRTA must be in compliance with CEQA, the 1906 Antiquities Act, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, National Trails System Act, Native American Graves and Repatriation Act, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and many other statutes addressing the recognition, discovery and handling of Native American Remains and cultural objects."

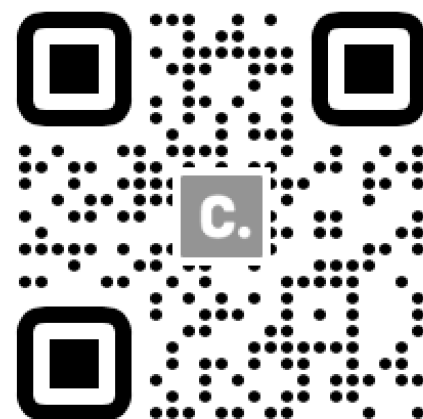
I interviewed Michelle Merrifield, Round Valley Tribal member, former coordinator of the Native WAY Program, and a member of the Kinest'e Community Coalition, about how it went on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the Great Redwood Trail Agency Meeting.

"Twelve of us [of the Kinest'e Community Coalition] attended and seven of us spoke. We were ready with our talking points during the time for public comment," said Merrifield. Of her own personal testimony, she recalled parts of what she shared: "I said, 'My DNA runs in these mountains and rivers. That is where I came from, that is a part of me. We are people that survived the odds of not surviving. Look at the history of what the US government and settlers did—they made it impossible for us to survive, but we did survive. We are resilient. Even as we have been colonized through boarding schools and driven onto reservations—we survived. There is a lot of documented history of the attempt of our annihilation. That is what this trail feels like—the government just doing whatever they want, not caring about the history of this place or the first peoples of it. As a tax-paying citizen and registered voter as well as an enrolled tribal member, I have the right to say no to this and I say no to this Great Redwood Trail. I do not see what is so great about it."

In a letter, which Merrifield has sent to GRTA, US. Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, Governor Gavin Newsom, Senator Mike McGuire, and Deputy Secretary for Tribal Affairs, Geneva Thompson, she outlines several reasons she opposes the trail: "1) the proposed trail goes through ancestral tribal villages on both sides of the Eel River. 2) There are no proposed plans to help keep these sacred sites protected from vandalism (there has been evidence that hikers and river rafters have been carving and etching out the ancestral petroglyphs from the rocks and caves along the Eel River). 3) The North Coast Railroad Authority left a mess in and along the banks of the Eel River; when Merrifield asked Louisa Morris, Coastal Conservancy Project Manager of Mendocino & Trinity Counties (and a member of the GRTA team), if there are plans to remediate the train tracks and toxic creosote wood support to restore the terrain to its natural existence, Morris responded with "no." 4) The proposed area for the trail is prone to landslides in the winter. There is no proposed plan to close the pathway/trail during the winter months. 5) There are no lights and no cell phone service in the Eel River canyon; emergency services will not be able to get to that area fast enough to rescue anyone. 6) There are no proposed plans for protecting endangered animals and indigenous plants along the Eel River corridor. 7) Any careless construction methods on the trail along the Eel River will be detrimental to the river and aquatic life. 8) It could be dangerous for hikers and campers unfamiliar with the wilderness and the area. There are MMIW and MMIP (Missing Murdered Indigenous Women and People) in Round Valley and the people are still missing."

Merrifield mentioned Nikcole Whipple, Perry Lincoln, and Paula and Larry Fugman as other Round Valley community members also involved in this advocacy. When asked where the KCC (Kinest'e Community Coalition) is with their work after the Jan 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, Merrifield mentioned the KCC plans to touch base with all the tribes from Eureka all the way to SF or, "as my dad says, "Yurok all the way to Miwok."

The KCC will hold a meeting on Sunday, Feb 25<sup>th</sup> in Mateel Community Center in Redway, west of Garberville, 1-4pm. They will also present on March 28<sup>th</sup> in Eureka at the next GRTA public meeting, and they still hope to be included on the agenda. If you'd like more information and/or would like to get involved in the KCC advocacy work, you can contact Michelle Merrifield at [mmerrif707@gmail.com](mailto:mmerrif707@gmail.com). You can sign the petition, "Protect Waiklaki Ancestral Homelands" with QR Code on this page. The Kinest'e Community Coalition has not set up anything for funding, so Merrifield says the if Change.org asks for any funding - do not donate.



Do you have archives from the past, present news, and/or imaginings for the future of Round Valley? Tell us in person at The Round Valley Farmers' Market, every Friday (where we will also have the latest issues of The Round Valley Reader!) Or email us at: [coveloarts@gmail.com](mailto:coveloarts@gmail.com)



# Round Valley Reader



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**Attention reader – the following article is fictional and does not represent current or past happenings in Round Valley (but it could represent our future!)**

If you have dreams and ideas for the future of Round Valley, dear reader, we'd love to write them! Email us at [coveloarts@gmail.com](mailto:coveloarts@gmail.com), come chat with us at the Round Valley Farmers' Market on Fridays, or drop off your ideas at The Round Valley Public Library!

## DMV NOW KIOSK OPENS IN COVELO

Imagined by Jenn Procacci



The conveniences promised are spectacular - forget driving 3 hours round trip and waiting in line (sometimes for hours). Thanks to a DMV NOW kiosk recently installed in Round Valley, rural drivers can save on gas, time, and hassle.

Paid for by the Department of Transportation Rural Services Expansion Initiative (RSEI), the DMV NOW kiosk is located inside of Keith's Market. The kiosk provides a variety of services to the Round Valley community that formerly required a 3 hour round trip journey to Ukiah.

The kiosk facilitates the following services - completing registration renewal,

filing for planned nonoperation (PNO) status, paying vehicle registration suspension reinstatement fee, submitting an affidavit of non-use (ANU), removing an ANU, submitting proof of insurance when requested by the Vehicle Insurance Program, receiving your driver's record, receiving your vehicle record, receiving a replacement registration card or sticker, and replacing your driver's license. Autos, pickups, motorcycles, coach and park model trailers, and commercial vehicles that do not pay CVRA fees may all be registered at the kiosk. The best part is that you receive your registration tags instantly! You cannot renew registration for vessels, process a change of address, or submit proof of insurance for registration renewal at the kiosk.

The freestanding kiosk uses touchscreen technology to guide users through the available services and does not require an DMV employee to be present for use. It is available during Keith's regular operating hours, 8am-10pm, 7 days a week. You can pay using credit/debit cards or cash. Add that gas money you saved to your grocery budget.

## ARTISTS WANTED

Display & sell your artwork in the Round Valley Library Commons lobby!  
Email [commonsmanager@gmail.com](mailto:commonsmanager@gmail.com) or call Carol at (707) 354-1297



## WHAT AM I READING??

With support from Upstate California Creative Corps, Jenn Procacci and Michelle Peñaloza will create "Round Valley Reader: Past Present Future", a community focused publication showcasing the trajectory of Round Valley, and exploring imaginings for the future of our rural community in the face of climate change, wildfire pressure, economic and social justice challenges, and the hardships that are associated with being in the lowest quartiles of the California HPI. With joint experience in engaging communities through journalism, storytelling, creative writing and documentation, these 2 artists will explore the past, report the present, and work with the community to imagine our collective future using these methods.

The Round Valley Reader: Past Present Future is a community-centered publication exploring imaginings for the future of our rural community, engaging through journalism, storytelling, creative writing and documentation. The Round Valley Reader explores the past, reports the present, and imagines our collective future.

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# ASK CRABBY!



Dear Crabby—  
 We were just thrilled to read about the incredible work RVEMS Principal Shannon Britton is doing at her school! As lifelong learners and educators, stories like these make us feel so...not-crabby...inside! Is there a way you can talk to Principal Britton and learn more about what she is doing?

- Forever Curious

Do you need advice? Crabby is here to help! Questions will ALWAYS be kept anonymous. Don't be shy—seek your advice from Crabby at [coveloarts@gmail.com](mailto:coveloarts@gmail.com) or drop them in the box at the library, to the right of the main entrance, located by the back issues of *The Round Valley Reader*

Dear Forever Curious—

This is the wonderfully thoughtful answer we got from Principal Shannon Britton:

*I would say that our attendance rates have risen for many different reasons. Each month we offer Special Breakfast to all students. However, students with 90% attendance for the month can bring a guest to eat with them. Students with perfect attendance for the month can bring 2 guests to eat with them. Those are very popular.*

*Last year students saw at awards ceremonies that kids with perfect attendance for the quarter received a \$20 gift certificate to the Convenience store. Each quarter kids received Amazon gift cards for perfect attendance for the school year up to that point. Students would tell me that they wanted to earn these so that they could have money to spend.*

*We also have "fun themed days" at school. For example, Wednesday is our 100th day of school. We have activities planned for grades K-5th all focusing on activities surrounding 100. We will also celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday in March. We also had a kindness week, California Indian Days week, two spirit weeks a poster and a door contest. We make it academic yet fun. We also pump up the kids to become excited about it all.*

*Last but not least, we have an excellent staff who care about the students, and it shows. They make it a place where students want to be at. I believe it is a cumulation of all these reasons.*

<3 DC

## ART CONTEST For this years EARTH DAY FESTIVAL LOGO

April 20, 2024



Open call for submissions! Submit your digital or original art by Feb 5th. The Earth Day committee will choose the winner, whose art will earn \$100 and be featured in all event promotions. All submitted artwork will be showcased during the festival. Don't miss this opportunity!

For questions and for submissions email [Commonsmanager@gmail.com](mailto:Commonsmanager@gmail.com)  
 Original work can be submitted to The Round Valley Public Library.

Any submissions may be used for any future Earth Day events.



Covelo/Round Valley Community

## Seed Swap & Scion Exchange

FREE Event - rain or shine  
 Indoor and Outdoor - dress warmly!

11 AM - 2 PM  
 Saturday, February 10

Round Valley Library Commons,  
 23925 Howard Street, Covelo, CA

Bring to swap or share: seed, scion, bulbs, plants, cuttings, excess tools, old gardening books...

You don't need to bring seeds or scion to participate BUT do label what you bring: Type of plant, varietal name, and in the case of seeds, where and when they were grown!

This is a clean and sober, family-friendly event.

Check guidelines for seed and plant material prep: <https://frvpl.org/seed-swap-and-scion-exchange/>



## JOIN OUR PASSIONATE MUSIC GROUP WITH 15 YEARS RUNNING!

If you love early medieval music, beautiful harmonies, and want to sing with us, we want you in our group. Join your voice with ours in our musical journey.

We meet once a week and perform several times a year. No experience singing with groups needed, just a willing voice.

Questions? Call or text Lucy Blais at 707-888-9139

## Public Service Announcement

### Re: incorrect street signage

There are a lot of street intersections in Round Valley which are unmarked or have an inaccurate or incorrect street sign, resulting in confusion and creating problems for emergency first responders. We (RVMAC Disaster Preparedness Committee) are organizing a letter writing campaign to the appropriate entities asking that the signs be replaced and fixed in a timely manner and names be used. If this is something which you support can you email Lourance Hall ([lourancehall@gmail.com](mailto:lourancehall@gmail.com)) with a simple "yes" or "I agree" re: Street Signs in Round Valley or you can write your own email as well to CalTrans ([district.1.pio@dot.ca.gov](mailto:district.1.pio@dot.ca.gov)) and the County ([dot@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:dot@mendocinocounty.org)). For more info, contact Lourance Hall, (707) 972-3637

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