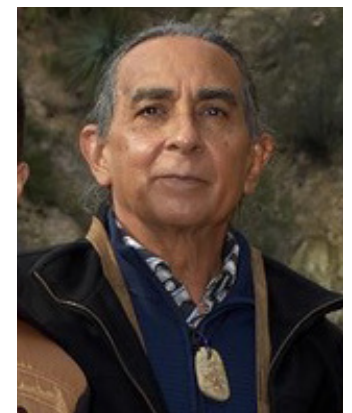


“WE ARE STILL HERE.”

A REPORT ON PAST, PRESENT, AND ONGOING HARMS AGAINST LOCAL TRIBES

Developed in collaboration with representatives from the Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians, and San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.



A REPORT ON PAST, PRESENT, AND ONGOING HARMS AGAINST LOCAL TRIBES

Report prepared for the County of Los Angeles – January 2023

Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission

Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

In collaboration with representatives from:

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council

San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

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**THIS LAND WAS
ORIGINALLY AND IS
STILL INHABITED AND
CARED FOR BY THE
TONGVA, TATAVIAM,
SERRANO, KIZH, AND
CHUMASH PEOPLES.**

As recognized by the County of Los Angeles in its formal
Land Acknowledgment, adopted November 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND

In July 2021, Supervisors Hilda Solis and Janice Hahn brought forth a motion intended to acknowledge and apologize for the historical mistreatment of California Native Americans by Los Angeles County. The motion stated that it is “critical that truth-telling begins with the First Peoples of what is now known as the County of Los Angeles (County), and that the histories and the people who have been intentionally erased are acknowledged and receive official apologies.”

To support the gathering of input to inform ways in which the County has harmed local Tribes, the County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously passed a motion on October 5, 2021 that directed the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS); Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission (LANAIC), and the Department of Arts and Culture (Arts and Culture) to hire a consultant. Cogstone Resource Management, Inc. (Cogstone), in partnership with Kearns & West and Avid Core, was selected as the consultant and has prepared the following report in collaboration with participating Los Angeles County Tribes (listed below).

The Process

Cogstone facilitated meetings and gathered feedback from a group of designated representatives from Tribes whose ancestral lands intersect with Los Angeles County’s present-day boundaries. Referred to in this report as Tribal Representatives, the group was asked to share lived experiences and oral histories; to provide information to update the County of Los Angeles’ understanding of the history of the region and Tribal communities; and to give input to advance truth, healing, and transformation on the ways the County has harmed local Tribes. The work was conducted in three phases, each phase focused on a specific outcome while acknowledging and accounting for the overlap between the topics of land acknowledgement, land access, and harms.

The California Native American Heritage Commission provided their AB 52 list of 22 Native American Tribes with ties to Los Angeles County to LANAIC in December 2021. All 22 Tribal governments with generally five tribal affiliations—the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples—were invited to participate.

Designated representatives from the following Tribes participated consistently in the facilitated sessions held between March and December 2022.

- Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
- Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council
- San Fernando Band of Mission Indians
- San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

**BREAKING
THE CYCLE
OF HARM**

Members of the Morales Family, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, holding a map of their land grant

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez



“WHAT IS DONE TO THE LAND IS DONE TO THE PEOPLE.”

—Kimberly Morales-Johnson,
Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel
Band of Mission Indians

Intent of this Report

Harms cannot be discussed only as part of the past. Multigenerational trauma—land seizure, disease, subjugation, relocation, broken promises, and genocide—continues to impact Native peoples. The following report is not intended to be a full chronicle and timeline of all harms perpetrated against Tribes located in what is now known as the County of Los Angeles.

Instead, we heard a common theme in our discussions with the Planning Group: The County must go beyond an apology for harms and take action. The following report outlines the actionable steps identified by the Planning Group.

Taking the action steps outlined will help the County make progress toward breaking the cycle of harm. As one Tribal representative put it, local Tribes are having the same conversations their parents and grandparents have had; they are participating in this process now in the hopes that their children and grandchildren don't have to repeat it again. This ongoing harm of disregard could start to be healed with action.

**THE COUNTY OF
LOS ANGELES
SITS ON
STOLEN LAND.**

The following is not intended to be an all-encompassing history of the Tribes in the County of Los Angeles. Instead, it aims to offer a broad overview of the harm of land theft and seizure by government entities and individuals so that readers of this report can have context to understand the need for the outlined action steps.

The real history of the land, now known as the County of Los Angeles, centers the Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples and begins long before Spanish settlers arrived. The Tribes in this area thrived because of their unique relationship with the land and their stewardship approach to land conservation.

In 1542, the first European expedition landed on Catalina Island, home to the Tongva, and made the first ever recorded contact between the Spanish people and the Native people of modern-day Los Angeles County. Other European explorers made contact with the Tongva in the intervening years (Portuguese explorer Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595 and Spanish explorer Sebastián Vizcaino in 1602) but permanent settlement did not occur until the Portola Expedition in 1769.

The Spanish crown returned in 1769 to build missions and pueblos to supply the Philippines-Acapulco trade ships sailing the Pacific with food and other necessities. Further, presidios were built to protect the missions and pueblos from possible encroachments by Russia and France into Alta California. As the Spanish expanded along the coast of Alta California, they enslaved Native peoples, forcing them to build and maintain the missions, pueblos, and presidios for the Spanish settlers while enduring unspeakable abuse at the hands of Spanish soldiers. Local Tribes were forced to move from their villages and give up their languages and culture. Tribes were given new names after the missions, which is reflected in the names of many local Tribes today.

When the Spanish colonized lands throughout the world, including Alta California, their actions were regulated by the “Recopilación de Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias.” Signed in 1680 and consisting of four volumes, the Recopilación outlined the rights of the inhabitants of the land during colonization which included, “[rights to] their possessions, the right to as much land as they needed for their habitations, for tillage, and for the pasturage of their flocks.” In Alta California, this meant that the Spanish held the land in trust for Indians (i.e., the Indians maintained their Native title to the land, water, and mineral rights) living in and around missions, but these rights did not extend to the unconverted Indian people still living in their traditional villages. When Pedro Fages took over as Governor of California, he began issuing land grants for ranchos to various Spaniards to only use the lands if they did not encroach upon Indian villages (aka rancherias by the Spanish) or harm the Indians.

After winning its independence from Spain through war, Mexico proclaimed emancipation in 1826, Mexico continued to adhere to Spanish laws requiring Indians' houses, farms, orchards, and fields in and around their villages be set aside for their use. The secularization of the missions in 1833 resulted in Spanish-born padres being replaced with Mexican-born padres. Mission property was to be distributed to the Indian Neophytes (those baptized by the Catholic Church). However, through a combination of systemic racism and governmental greed, mission lands were stolen from the Neophytes by the Mexican government and given to non-Native families as land grants and/or sold for profit.

When California reached United States statehood in 1850, it initially followed Spanish and Mexican laws protecting Native title to the land. The State of California in its 1850 California for the Government and Protections of Indians stated in Section 2 that: "Persons and proprietors of lands on which Indians are residing shall permit such Indians peaceably to reside on such lands, unmolested in the pursuit of their usual avocations for the maintenance of themselves and their families; nor shall they be forced to abandon their homes or villages where they have resided for a number of years." Although the Act states that Indians should be allowed to live on the land undisturbed, the Act allowed for the Justice of the Peace to remove Indians from land owned by White settlers, Further the Act allowed for the indenture of Indian children and the forced labor of convicted Indians whose bond was paid for by a white settler.

The Act to Ascertain and Settle the Private Land Claims in the State of California, passed by Congress in 1851, did not require Indians to make land claims as their Native title was never extinguished. The Act only applied to those private lands claims whose title was derived from the Spanish and Mexican governments. However, in practice, Native titles were not always respected, and many Native Peoples lost their lands within this period to encroaching settlers. Through subsequent federal and state legislation that upheld these claims by settlers, Tribes lost their land, water, and mineral rights.

Throughout the 1800s, the U.S. was on a mission to eradicate Native American Tribes. Between 1851 and 1852, the U.S. Government Treaty Commissioners signed what would become known as the "18 lost treaties." The treaties set aside 8.5 million acres in California for Indian reservations and pledged to compensate Tribes for ceded land. Much of the land set aside was highly sought after by white settlers and after increased pressure from California representatives, the U.S. Congress never ratified the treaties, and they were forgotten.

These centuries of displacement, enslavement, incarceration, and genocide from successive waves of settlers—the Spanish, the Mexicans, and then Americans—mean that most local Tribes don't hold the present-day titles to their ancestral lands.

**HARMS CONTINUE
TO STEM FROM
THE INITIAL HARM
OF LAND THEFT
AND SEIZURE.**

**“TRUTH IS THE
FIRST STEP TO
THE RECOVERY
OF OUR
STOLEN LAND
AND BROKEN
PROMISES.”**

—Chairman Robert Dorame,
Gabrielino Tongva Indians
of California

Native Peoples see the domino effect of having their land stolen every day. The Tongva, Tataviam, Serrano, Kizh, and Chumash Peoples still struggle for recognition of their existence, recognition of their sacred spaces, and recognition of past harms that impact their communities economically, socially, culturally, and physically. They face discrimination because of their distinct cultures, identities, and ways of life, and are disproportionately affected by poverty and marginalization. Much of local Tribes’ ancestral lands have been developed into some of the County’s most expensive zip codes and Tribal members who remain in the County’s present-day boundaries are continually priced out of their neighborhoods. They have been robbed of generational wealth and the opportunities that come with it.

While the resulting land theft and seizure is a loss of assets, this does not accurately capture the harm for local Tribes. When the land was taken, the relationship between land and Tribes was severed. They lost access to food, to housing, to history. Vital connections to identity and culture were cut off.

Local Tribes have worked toward land return for decades but have faced numerous barriers and been told repeatedly by the County and other government agencies that it is not feasible.

When the County embarked on a process to return Bruce’s Beach to the Bruce family in April 2021 without an acknowledgment of the First Peoples, Tribal representatives said it was another harm and form of erasure in a long line of injustices. Although the Board of Supervisors in discussing the final motion on Bruce’s Beach at the June 28, 2022 Board meeting did acknowledge the injustices done to the First Peoples whose land was also forcibly taken, the harm had already been done. One Tribal representative said it is “insulting” to have been told by some County representatives they can’t return land when it has been done for others, including for other marginalized people.

Tribal representatives said they felt pitted against another marginalized group, something they did not want, with the County’s decision to return land to the Bruce family before returning land to local Tribes. One Tribal representative shared that they saw the County take a two-pronged action approach to rectifying this harm for the Bruce family. The first was that the present-day title was transferred to the Bruce family’s descendants, and the second was that they were offered a form of reparations. They said they were hopeful a similar approach could be taken when amending harms against local Tribes.

**HARMS CANNOT
BE DISCUSSED
ONLY AS
PART OF HISTORY.**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The County should take steps to not only correct the initial harm of land dispossession but also the resulting harms with lasting impact. Tribal representatives provided a few examples of actionable next steps the County could take to start to remedy the harms caused by land seizure:

- **PRIORITIZE THE FORMATION OF THE TRIBAL RELATIONS OFFICE (TRO)**, which would serve as a liaison and point of contact for all Tribal concerns. The TRO is necessary to provide the consistency needed to strengthen relationships with the local Tribes and build on the County's commitment to reducing and mitigating harm to the greatest extent possible. It should be staffed by qualified Native Peoples and the hiring and recruitment process should be designed to attract and prioritize talent from local Tribes.
- **DEVELOP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO ESTABLISH A PROCESS FOR LAND RETURN TO THE FIRST PEOPLES.** Once the TRO is established, the Office should work with local Tribes, existing Tribal cultural organizations and Tribal land conservancies, such as the Tongva Taraxat Paxaavxa Conservancy and the Tataviam Land Conservancy, to identify specific tracts, prioritizing sacred cultural spaces, and places for land return.
- **ADOPT A FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSAL POLICY AND PROCESS FOR LOCAL TRIBES.** Should County land be identified for sale or disposition, local Tribes should be afforded the opportunity to claim the land first, prior to being offered to other parties. Should a local Tribe decide they want the lands, this policy should include financial resources to cover fees for land deed transfers, land assessment reports, and other associated costs.
- **HELP LOCAL TRIBAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS STAY ON THEIR ANCESTRAL LAND** by offering affordable housing options and mortgage or rental assistance.
- **SHARE A PERCENTAGE OF PROPERTY TAXES WITH LOCAL TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS** and work with the Tribes to use that money to build community and/or cultural centers and support better government-to-government relations.
- **INCLUDE ACCURATE HISTORY TAUGHT FROM AN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE** in County educational programs. Educational programs should include Tribal members and/or Elders to share their history and provide cultural perspectives to land access, cultural resources, and preservation.

**HARMS
ARE ONGOING.**



Ongoing Harm

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE DENIED

Beverly Folkes, Elders Council
member, Fernandeño Tataviam
Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

Without land, local Tribes have faced countless barriers to cultural realization. Due to land access challenges, Tribal Elders cannot fully transmit their knowledge to future generations. Tribes often do not have permission to hold ceremonies and/or harvest traditional plants on their own homelands. Or if there is permission, there are restrictions on the size of gatherings that can be held, how much plant material that can be harvested, what materials can be used, and even how materials can be used in ceremonies. As a result, many practices have been suppressed for so long that younger generations don't know about them.

Although there are laws in place that require the County to consider impacts to Tribal cultural resources, sacred lands, and cultural places, there are still accounts of destruction and theft of their heritage. Tribal representatives shared they are still working to protect the lands that are left and fighting every day to preserve their culture and sacred spaces and places. One Tribal representative said it often feels like Tribal consultation is just box checking and that their concerns aren't valued. Another Tribal representative shared that the process places the labor, expertise, and knowledge of cultural resource experts from non-federally recognized Tribes below that of federally recognized Tribes, adding additional harm by not evening the playing field.

Further, the lack of a County archaeologist knowledgeable in the local Tribes' histories, cultural resources, and sacred spaces and places located within the County has caused harm through the destruction of sites and disinterment of ancestral remains and their burial items. Currently non-subject matter experts (i.e. planners) review cultural and tribal cultural resource assessments and determine if the assessments, whether for County-led projects or submitted by third parties, are in compliance with local and state laws. Non-subject matter experts, however, lack the background knowledge to recognize if pertinent information is missing or misinterpreted. In addition to improving the qualifications of staff, harm is also caused when these non-subject matter experts fail to do their due diligence in the review process.

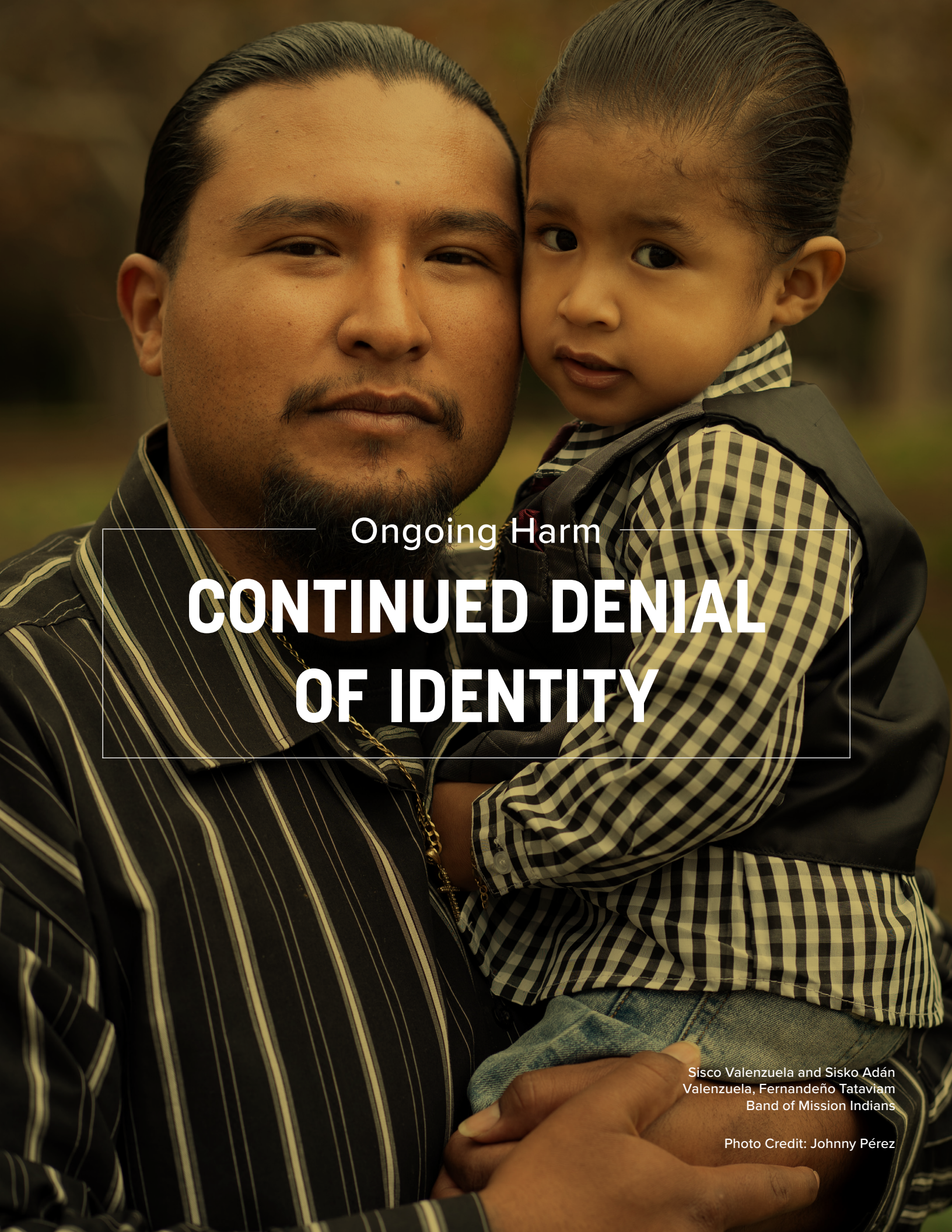
For example, when the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes museum (LA Plaza) was completed, the cultural resources consultant hired by LA Plaza stated that the burials at the Campo Santo, Los Angeles' first cemetery that is located between the LA Plaza buildings and the La Iglesia de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Ángeles (La Placita) and located on County-owned land, were removed and reburied elsewhere. This was based on a single reference. As a result, the area was cleared for the construction of a memorial garden and almost immediately, human remains, relatives of a number of southern California Tribes, were encountered and subsequently removed. If the County had a knowledgeable archaeologist to review the EIR, they would have known that only a handful of burials had been relocated when the cemetery was closed in 1844 and that more than 600 burials still lay within the boundaries of Campo Santo.

“MORE MUST BE DONE TO HOLD THOSE ACCOUNTABLE THAT STEAL FROM OUR SACRED GROUNDS. THIS IS OUR LIFELINE FROM OUR ANCESTORS TO US AND WE ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO WILL PRESERVE AND PROTECT THEM.”

—Chairwoman Donna Yocum, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- **CREATE MECHANISMS AND POLICIES TO ENSURE TRIBAL KNOWLEDGE AND INPUT IS VALUED, INCORPORATED, AND COMPENSATED** during California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Tribal consultations and/or other outreach activities. The County and the general public must understand that Tribal offices are generally understaffed and spread thin, responses to emails and calls are common so follow ups should be expected on important matters.
- **RETURN ANCESTRAL BELONGINGS, ARTIFACTS, AND DOCUMENTATION TO LOCAL TRIBES.** The County should work with local Tribes to determine what is culturally significant in County museums and facilities where ancestral belongings are currently stored. The County should relinquish ownership or, if preferred by the Tribe, to determine appropriate access.
- Once created, **THE TRO SHOULD SUPPORT THE STORAGE OF CEREMONIAL MATERIALS** on County-owned land and/or in County-owned facilities. This storage capacity would only be in support of local Tribes’ ability to engage freely in cultural, traditional, and religious practices and would be Tribe-initiated if desired and appropriate.
- **SUPPORT TRIBES’ ETHNOHISTORIANS TO GATHER, SYNTHESIZE, AND EXPAND ON CURRENT TRIBAL HISTORIES** and educational programs to correct the misinformation about the Tribes in the public sphere.
- **FUND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYEE TRAINING** about the history, experience, struggle, and resilience of the County’s First Peoples. This education will allow local Tribes to freely engage in ceremonial practices without becoming a public spectacle.
- **HIRE A COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGIST TO REVIEW CULTURAL AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT** for projects with the County to ensure that they provide accurate information. The archaeologist should be vetted by local Tribes and work closely with a team of representatives from local Tribes.
- **FOR COUNTY PROJECTS WITH GROUND DISTURBANCE, MANDATE TRIBAL-LED CULTURAL HUMILITY TRAINING AND OVERSIGHT BY STAFF** with cultural knowledge to ensure cultural resource monitors can work safely and with respect.



Ongoing Harm

CONTINUED DENIAL OF IDENTITY

Sisco Valenzuela and Sisko Adán
Valenzuela, Fernandefño Tataviam
Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

The continued denial of Tribal sovereignty, identity, and significance in the eyes of the Federal government and local governments, including the County, works to diminish the growth of Tribes and contributes to Tribal erasure. There is currently no mechanism for non-federally recognized Tribes to work side-by-side with the County as a government entity.



Eleanor Marie Mia, Treasurer, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

One Tribal representative shared that local Tribal governments are more than 100 years behind the County's organized government, a direct disadvantage for government-to-government consultation and leaving them reliant on colonial government structures. They said this was felt heavily during the pandemic when Tribal members had to ignore their identity and identify themselves as just a member of the general public to get access to protection and services.

Local universities and museums, including museums operated by the County, have started reaching out to Tribes to start the consultation process for the repatriation of human remains and cultural items affiliated with their Tribe. Tribal representatives shared that this has highlighted several issues, including the lateral harm of often having to work with a federally recognized Tribe in order to accelerate the repatriation process through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and not having land to rebury the remains once repatriated. The Tribal representatives said there have also been issues with museums and other agencies reaching out directly to individuals who self-identify as Tribal members without doing the proper due diligence or outreach to local Tribes.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- **PUT RESOURCES TOWARD REBUILDING LOCAL TRIBES**, which will include steps toward land back, financial backing, and resources to build community and support better government-to-government relations.
- **SUPPORT NON-FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES IN EFFORTS TO REPATRIATE ANCESTRAL REMAINS.** The current process does not provide non-federally recognized Tribes with the resources needed, follow an appropriate timeline, or show the proper respect for the remains. The County should work with local Tribes to identify ways to support these efforts.
- **CREATE TRUE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS** that extend beyond consultation as mandated by local, state, and federal laws.

A man with long, dark hair and a serious expression is the central figure. He is wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt under a vibrant, multi-colored patterned vest. He holds a large, light-colored feather in his left hand and a small, shallow, light-colored basket containing red and green items in his right hand. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a warm, golden light.

Ongoing Harm

CONTINUED DENIAL OF EXISTENCE

Benjamin Martinez,
Cultural Resources,
San Fernando Band
of Mission Indians

Photo Credit:
Johnny Pérez

“THE COUNTY WANTS THE TRIBES TO BE VISIBLE IN THE PAST TENSE NOT THE PRESENT TENSE. WE ARE STILL HERE.”

—President Rudy Ortega Jr.,
Fernandeño Tataviam Band of
Mission Indians



Alan Salazar, Tribal Elder and Educator, Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

First Peoples are a vital part of the greater Los Angeles County community today and into the future. Local Tribes are still here, and they have not left their ancestral lands despite centuries of harm and systemic oppression.

One Tribal representative shared that school children being taught the “This Land is Your Land” song exemplifies how the County’s education system erases Native American history from the start. Others noted the past tense language used to describe Tribes also causes erasure.

Tribal representatives shared that the County could play an important role in addressing data collection and reporting issues as related to local Tribes. One Tribal representative said it is important to have accurate data collection and reporting because this impacts the financial resources received. Another Tribal representative shared that it would be useful if the County could collect information on the entirety of the Native American and urban Indigenous population in the region, as well as desegregated by Tribe.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- **PRESENT TENSE LANGUAGE SHOULD BE USED WHEN REFERRING TO TRIBES** in all County communications. Signage on County property should also be in present tense and the County should provide literature on local Tribes as they exist today.
- **DEVELOP CLEAR PROCESS FOR WORKING WITH NON-FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES.** The County has the power to empower Tribes without federal recognition. A clear process would ensure local Tribes without federal recognition are treated respectfully and that their input is valued.
- **INCLUDE LOCAL TRIBES IN COUNTY DATA SETS.** This process should be designed in partnership with the local Tribal governments, so as not give other people, such as consultants or contractors, the power to say who owns it.
- **BALANCE THE TIME/RESOURCES OF THE TRIBES WITH ACTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION.** Extending the invite to Tribes to participate in both planning efforts and public facing efforts. It will be up to the Tribes to say when it is appropriate to participate and at what level to participate



Ongoing Harm

ERASURE THROUGH TERMINOLOGY AND WORD CHOICE

Andrew “Guiding Young Cloud”
Morales, Gabrieleno/Tongva San
Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez



Frank Martinez, Tribal Elder Cultural Resources, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians, and Ellie Morales Recalde, Jr. Tribal Member, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

“WE NEED THE COUNTY TO GO PAST BEING AN ALLY AND BE AN ADVOCATE FOR US.”

—Kimberly Morales-Johnson, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

In the County’s efforts to be more inclusive, the First Peoples of the County have often been erased. Language and word choice have tremendous power and can cause harm if used incorrectly or interchangeably.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- In partnership with local Tribes and the urban Native American and Indigenous population, **DEVELOP A LIST OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS THAT SHOULD BE USED CONSISTENTLY COUNTYWIDE**, such as in all communications, Board motions, trainings, and educational materials.
- **USE WHATEVER NAMING CONVENTION A TRIBE WANTS TO USE**, even if there is not consistent with naming formats across all tribal names. When it comes to the different spellings and naming conventions, the County should focus on making additional context and histories available to explain the different spellings.

“

WE MUST GO FURTHER.

As the County prioritizes inclusivity and centers historically excluded voices, it also needs to now, more than ever, ground this work in truth.

”

– Board Motion by Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Janice Hahn, July 13, 2021



Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California Tribal members pose at Clara Basin (Henninger Flats).

Tribal members from left to right:

- Chris Dorame
- Seriana Dorame
- Mercedes Dorame
- Adrienne Kinsella
- Imogen Reid Dorame
- Jacob Dorame
- Tribal Chair, Robert Dorame
- George Dorame, Elder
- Mat Dorame
- Dora Dorame, Elder
- Jon Dorame
- Julias Jacques
- Katie Dorame
- River Garza
- Demetria Dorame
- Christina Conley
- Clare Conley
- Cole Conley

Photo Credit: Josef Jacques

With this work, the County has taken significant steps toward acknowledgment of First Peoples, the land, and of harms. But acknowledgment without action is an empty gesture, self-serving, and more in line with the broken promises and treaties of the past than of the County’s current commitment to meaningfully address injustice.

These actions will likely not come without push back as these topics can often bring up animosity toward Native Peoples. This animosity comes not only from white people but also from people from other ethnic backgrounds. In a resource shared by on Tribal representative early in the process, author and lecturer Dina Gilio-Whitaker defines this as “settler fragility.”

“LIKE WHITE FRAGILITY, SETTLER FRAGILITY IS THE INABILITY TO TALK ABOUT UNEARNED PRIVILEGE—IN THIS CASE, THE PRIVILEGE OF LIVING ON LANDS THAT WERE TAKEN IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY THROUGH PROFOUND VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE.”

But without action, these gestures shift the onus of action back onto local Tribes, which have already been working for centuries to reclaim what was stolen and is still being taken. Exploring and undertaking the actions outlined in this report will keep the County accountable and build trust. As some of the action steps outlined in this report are long-term actions, the County should also commit to following up with the Tribal representatives who participated in this process on a regular basis, outlining the progress that has been made.



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Cover Photos:

Row 1 - Chairwoman Donna Yocum, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians; Chris Dorame, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California; Sofya Samaniego-Ervin, Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians; Art Morales, Tribal Elder, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians

Row 2 – Kimberly Morales Johnson, Tribal Council Secretary, Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians; Jess Valenzuela, Elders Council, San Fernando Band of Mission Indians; Geraldine Nunez, Elders Council member, Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians; Tribal Chair, Robert Dorame, Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California

Fernandefio Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
Gabrieleno/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

Photo Credit: Johnny Pérez

Gabrielino Tongva Indians of California

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