

2018 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Research and Collaboration for Restoration of *Tstyiwí* on the Pecho Coast



Since 2009, PG&E has hosted a Cal Poly archaeological field class on the lands surrounding the Diablo Canyon Power Plant in collaboration with the yak tityu yak tiłhini - Northern Chumash Tribe. The field class focuses on Native-affiliated sites with middens that have been affected by coastal erosion, public trail access and historic land uses.

In 2015, Cal Poly held their archaeological field class along lower Pecho Creek at site CA-SLO-51/H, a multi-component site listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing element to the *Rancho Canada de los Osos y Pecho y Islay* archaeological district since 1974. The restoration area corresponds to the former Northern Chumash village site of *Tstyiwí*, which was later the site of a Rancho Period adobe, representing a microcosm of California history. The site was selected for the 2015 Cal Poly archaeological field class because its integrity was being steadily compromised by cliff-face and creek bank erosion, aeolian erosion and disturbances related to agricultural uses (primarily plowing) dating back to circa 1844.

Approximately 25 Cal Poly students, Northern Chumash monitors, tribal representatives, professional CRM archaeologists, and visiting scholars worked at CA-SLO-51/H under the direction of Dr. Terry Jones as part of the archaeological

field class. Mike Taggart, PG&E Cultural Resource Specialist for the Diablo Canyon lands, facilitated the Cal Poly fieldwork and development of the restoration project.

Recognizing the cultural and scientific significance of the Pecho Creek site (CA-SLO-51/H), PG&E's Diablo Canyon Land Stewardship Team (DCLST) permanently discontinued agricultural cultivation at the site. The DCLST voluntarily changed the long-standing agriculturally focused land use to one that emphasizes protection of the cultural resources, improving water quality, expanding native habitat and providing a living classroom for education. With these shared goals in mind, PG&E re-engaged the Tribe and Cal Poly to develop and implement a restoration plan for the site in early 2016.

The project played an important role in reuniting the Northern Chumash Tribe with a place imbued with cultural significance and affirming oral history. Personal and family connections between the Tribe and *Tstyiwí* are profound with very deep roots. The site retains tremendous significance to the Tribe as an element of their cultural patrimony. Because of this significance, Cal Poly decided to limit archaeological investigation to the testing completed in 2015, and to focus instead on working with PG&E to eliminate subsurface impacts and stabilize the site area.

Results of the archival and archaeological research undertaken at the site have been used for education, training, and creation of an educational exhibit at PG&E's Energy Education Center in San Luis Obispo. The project's far-reaching benefits include protection of Northern Chumash cultural materials, reuniting the Tribe with a culturally significant location, affirming tribal oral history, improved environmental conditions, and provision of a living classroom for community engagement and education.

Learn more about the [Pecho Coast](#), and the [Northern Chumash Tribe](#).