Arcata MLRA Soil Survey Office

2019 Pacific Region Native Youth Food Sovereignty Summit

Purpose

The 2019 Pacific Region Native Youth Food Sovereignty Summit was held on September 18-21. The summit was a collaboration of the NRCS Eureka Field Office, Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC), Klamath Trinity Resource Conservation District (KTRCD), and five local tribes from Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in California (Hupa, Yurok, Wiyot, Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria).

High school and college students recognized as youth leaders of their indigenous communities traveled from Hawaii, Nevada, and the far reaches of California to Humboldt County to learn about food sovereignty. They visited community gardens, learned about the importance of salmon and how to sustain production, and listened to elders talk about preserving traditions.

Soil scientist Ann Tan talks to students about flood-plain terraces.

On Friday, the students traveled to Tish Tang Campground in Hoopa, California. The day began with Carlos Suarez, California State Conservationist, talking about leadership. The students learned about his career path and were inspired to strive toward careers in which they are passionate. A delicious lunch of fry bread and freshly caught salmon from the Trinity River was served, and Hupa people talked about their fishing practices and the salmon run. They also talked about the forestry practices on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation and how they are maintaining their traditions through forestry management.

In the afternoon of September 20, Ann Tan, soil scientist from the Arcata, California, Soil Survey Office led the students from the campground to the Trinity River. As they walked toward the river, she talked about the changing landforms. She talked about the geology of the area and the fact that geology is one of the factors of soil formation. The students discussed the importance of soil properties, such as soil texture and drainage, and how they can be deduced from the landforms, geology, and plant communities. The students participated in a soil texturing exercise and were taught how to feel for the difference in the amount of sand, silt, and clay in a soil.

Key Outcomes / Products

Thirty-four Native American students from three states learned about NRCS, Web Soil Survey, and soil science. They now understand that soil properties can affect building sites, water quality, and forestry management practices.