



P R E S S R E L E A S E

TO: Central California Media
FROM: Aaron Collins, Director of Communications, SRT
DATE: 5/6/21
RE: After pandemic hiatus, Go Native returns to Kaweah Oaks Preserve
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For Immediate Release

After pandemic hiatus, Go Native returns to Kaweah Oaks Preserve May 15

(VISALIA, CA) – For thousands of years, Central California’s Native American Yokuts tribes have crafted items for daily utility, ceremony, and play including pine needle baskets, gathering trays, cradleboards, walnut dice games, Tule ducks, drums, fish traps, and more. While their way of life may have vanished from easy view unlike locations where Native life is still prominent, such as in the American Southwest, the Yokuts’ culture hasn’t vanished entirely.

Come Saturday, May 15, Go Native: A Native American Celebration -- with support from sponsors Visit Visalia and Sequoia Riverlands Trust -- will bring a rare opportunity to meet our region’s Native Americans who continue to celebrate their living culture annually at Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

According to event organizer Jennifer Malone of the local Wukchumni tribe, “Go Native is important because the area tribes want to let the public know that we are still here. Continuing our ceremonies, our basket weaving, and our language is our life,” Malone said. “We continue to teach our youth all that was given to us from our ancestors. Mostly we want Go Native to offer a big thank you to our community and especially to our mother Marie Wilcox for all she has given us,” Malone added.

Visit Visalia Executive Director Nellie Freeborn sees the value in Go Native. “There are many examples of Native American culture in our area that visitors can see, such as the pictographs at Hospital Rock in Sequoia National Park or the exhibits of Native American woven baskets at the Tulare County Museum.” But Freeborn says Go Native offers attendees a unique opportunity. “The Go Native event gives visitors the opportunity to not just ‘see’ but to ‘do,’ with opportunities for hands-on learning and for speaking with members of our Yokuts community as they share their arts and culture with the public.”

“Sequoia Riverlands Trust treasures our partnership with our region’s Native American community. Our support for Go Native reflects our commitment to offering our conservation lands in support of the Yokuts’ cultural activities in gratitude for all they continue to teach us about our region’s native plants and historical practices on these important lands we all love,” said Aaron Collins, SRT Director of Marketing and Communications. “Their willingness to share all that with us reflect a generosity and sincere desire for increased understanding and awareness.”

Cultural events allow travelers to experience the complexity of a community, which Visit Visalia officials think “really enhances a vacation. And while most people visit Visalia because of our proximity to the national parks, we hope they will stay longer to explore the many other places, attractions and cultures that make up our community, including our local Native culture,” Freeborn said.

To help visitors participate in the Go Native event, as well as have fun in the national parks, Visit Visalia is offering a limited time offer. Visitors that book and stay 3-nights in Visalia will receive either a FREE Annual Pass to Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks (good for an entire year) or receive a FREE \$50 gas card, to help fuel their travels. Complete rules can be found at VisitVisalia.com/stay.

EVENT DETAILS:

SCHEDULE: 10 AM: Opening ceremony and cultural blessing, drumming, and history of the Yokuts Tribe. 10:30-NOON: Weaving, more Native crafting classes. **LUNCH** featuring Indian tacos. 1-3 PM: native crafting classes, hike around Kaweah Oaks, children’s activities. Classes are FREE and open to the public.

ABOUT VISIT VISALIA:

Visit Visalia is a collaboration of the Visalia Tourism Marketing District and the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau (VCVB) dedicated to marketing, advertising, public relations and other promotional efforts that inspire travel to the City of Visalia. Visit Visalia works closely with local lodging properties, restaurants and attractions to foster interest in Visalia as a year-round destination for leisure, family, and meeting and convention travelers. For more information about Visit Visalia go to www.VisitVisalia.com and follow Visit Visalia on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

ABOUT SEQUOIA RIVERLANDS TRUST:

SRT’s mission is to inspire love and lasting protection for important lands. Visalia-based SRT is a regional nonprofit land trust dedicated to strengthening California's heartland and the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley. The wealth, productivity and beauty of this land inspire our work to conserve it for future generations. www.sequoiariverlands.org

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