

Eel River Recovery Project – Salmon Awareness Festival 2017
Workshop - Forest Health = Salmon Health
October 14, Covelo, CA

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) is sponsoring the third Round Valley Salmon Awareness Festival in Covelo on Saturday, October 14 with the support of the Round Valley Indian Tribes (RVIT). The event has two parts, a forest health workshop at the RVIT Indian Health Center (IHC) conference room early in the day, and a traditional Native American salmon feed and ceremony during the late afternoon at Hidden Oaks Park.

Doors at the RVIT IHC, on the right off Highway 162 north of Covelo, will open at 9:30 AM and coffee, bagels and fresh fruit will be served. Beginning at 10 AM and extending to 2 PM, there will be a workshop entitled “Forest Health Equals Salmon Health” that will begin with presentations by those knowledgeable about forestry. Ranger Frank Aebly of the Upper Lake/Covelo Ranger District will make a presentation on recently completed forest health projects on the Mendocino National Forest and also talk about additional areas within his jurisdiction in need of forest health treatment.

Tracy Elgin is a Native American who resides in the upper North Fork Eel River and his talk entitled “A First-Hand Look at Forest Health” will address the disappearance of oak woodlands in his watershed. Bruce Hilbach-Barger is working on a biomass energy plant for the RVIT and will talk about how the removal of fuel it might use could play a role in forest health improvement. Jana Carp of the Fire Ring Network will present on “Fire Adapted Communities” and she will point out that, when each of us reduces fuels and improves forest health around our homes, we have individual parcel protection from catastrophic fire; however, if a community works together they can mold a fire-adapted ecosystem. RVIT elders Ron Lincoln Sr. and Ernie Merrifield will talk about traditional ecological knowledge and forest health and how the community can come back into balance with the landscape.

The discussion after presentations will be facilitated and thoughts and ideas expressed by the public and the experts captured as a written record and posted to the ERRP website. This provides a foundation of understanding and ideas about community organizing to achieve forest health objectives will be captured.

At 3 PM everyone will reconvene at the Hidden Oaks Park, which is across from the RVIT casino off Highway 162, for the traditional salmon feed and festivities. Salmon will be roasted in the traditional Indian way on carved redwood stakes around a ceremonial fire, and corn will be served as a main side-dish. Community members attending are invited to bring their favorite side dishes pot-luck style. Indian prayers and song will follow the feast which ends at 6 PM or whenever it gets dark.

A van will transport Willits residents to the forest health workshop and salmon celebration, which will leave from in front of the Willits Hub at 630 South Main Street just south of Highway 20 at 8:30 AM on October 14. Call Robin Leler to arrange transport at 459-0155 or Bruce Hilbach-Barger at 983-6169, if you would like to volunteer in Covelo. For more information also see www.eelriverrecovery.org or the ERRP Facebook page. There is no charge for admission or for the salmon feed, but donations will be accepted. Those donating \$25 or more will become ERRP members.



Ron Lincoln Sr. and his Wylackii family sing a blessing song before the 2014.



Wilderness Lodge Fire flares up on Hogshed Ridge. July 2014.