

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

WASHOE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT



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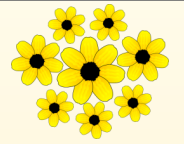
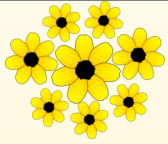
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Single-leaf pinyon — (*Pinus monophyla*)

The predominant piñon of the Great Basin



WEPD WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Benny and Hunter Fillmore joined WEPD staff in early April. Benny grew up on a ranch in Fallon Nevada. He joined the Hobart hot shots right out of high school, and he is a master carpenter with more than 50 years in construction experience. He brings a lifetime of knowledge and experience to WEPD as the Resiliency Garden Technician.

Hunter was born and raised in the Dresslerville community. He followed in his father's footsteps as a fire fighter and skilled carpenter. For the past ten years he has been in California gaining experience. Hunter recently moved home with his family to raise his two sons in their ancestral homelands, and work for his tribe. He joins us as an Environmental Specialist!

Eliza Fitzgerald joins WEPD as the new Grants Specialist, assisting the department with grant tracking, reporting and grant applications. Coming from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Eliza has worked in environmental restoration as a technician, research scientist, and project manager since 2020. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a B.S. in Geology and a minor in Anthropology. An avid hiker, plant-lover, and aspiring herbalist, Eliza is looking forward to spending a lot of her free time in nature getting to know the local environment.

Eliza is very excited to work with the team at WEPD and feels inspired by her colleagues' commitment to advancing the protection, conservation, and restoration of the environment for the Washoe Tribe. Eliza hopes to contribute to this mission and feels lucky to gain the valuable experience of working for and with the Washoe Tribe.





The Washoe Tribe Celebrates Earth Day!



The Washoe Environmental Protection Department celebrated our annual **Earth Day** in the **Hung-a-lel-ti Community** this year! Earth Day was founded to raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage us to take action locally and globally.

On May 3rd, WEPD was joined by environmental organizations from around the Carson Valley and Tahoe Basin to offer education, crafts, activities, and gifts for the community.

Benny and Hunter Fillmore opened the event with a prayer for the earth and all those who call it home, and asked participants to think of protecting the planet for future generations.



Kids collected trash during the annual fun run. Safely picking up and properly disposing litter is a simple way to keep materials out of the environment that may be harmful to plants, animals, or humans.



Ready-to-plant Jeffrey Pine saplings were handed out by the Sugar Pine Foundation to be planted outdoors and help boost Jeffrey populations in the region.





The Washoe Tribe Celebrates Earth Day!





The Washoe Tribe Celebrates Earth Day!



WEPD handed out wildflower seeds and helped attendants make seed balls to plant in their yards. Planting a variety of native wildflowers can provide food for pollinators, and increase species biodiversity and ecosystem health.



Organizations brought their own interactive and educational crafts and displays. Participants got to make their own buttons with the EPA, make all natural birdfeeders out of pinecones, and taste test different pinenuts.



Attendees were also invited to bring their bikes for repairs, courtesy of Alpine County Chamber of Commerce. And of course– the Giant Inflatable Lahontan Cutthroat made an appearance!



All of WEPD's partner organizations and community members made this an Earth Day to remember. Our department looks forward to continued engagement with the community to advocate for conservation, protection, and restoration of the environment for the Washoe Tribe and future generations of land stewards.



PINYON STEWARDSHIP



By: Hunter Fillmore

Since the beginning of time the Washoe people have stewarded pinion and juniper forests. WEPD continues this relationship in the Washoe Resilience Garden located at the Dresslerville Ranch. This year two-thousand germinated seedlings have been potted, with another three-thousand stratifying alongside numerous other culturally significant plants. Big sage brush acts as a nurse plant for pinyon seedlings, providing protection and shade to make out planting more successful.



One germinated pinyon seed being potted. They will stay in pots for more than a year! until they are ready for out-planting



To germinate, pinyon seeds are rinsed, placed into vermiculite, then left to stratify until they begin to sprout.



Stewarding into the future!

As a direct result of climate change, and wildfires the pinyon juniper forests are disappearing rapidly. The goal at WEPD along with Washoe people and volunteers is to use the Washoe Resilience Garden alongside traditional ecological knowledge to re-establish pinions and culturally significant plants within the burn scars. An ambitious undertaking to say the least, as pinions can take sixty years to grow about six feet tall! The adults who plant pinions now will likely not see the trees mature and yield pine nuts, however efforts today will ensure that the ancient relationship between Washoe people and pinyon pines will continue for generations.



Out-planting on the northern side of an established big sage brush and protected by a bio-degradable cage .



The green house is filling up fast!

Third Annual Arbor Day Tree Planting

April 25, 2025 – Curtz Lake, CA

By: Josh Alessi

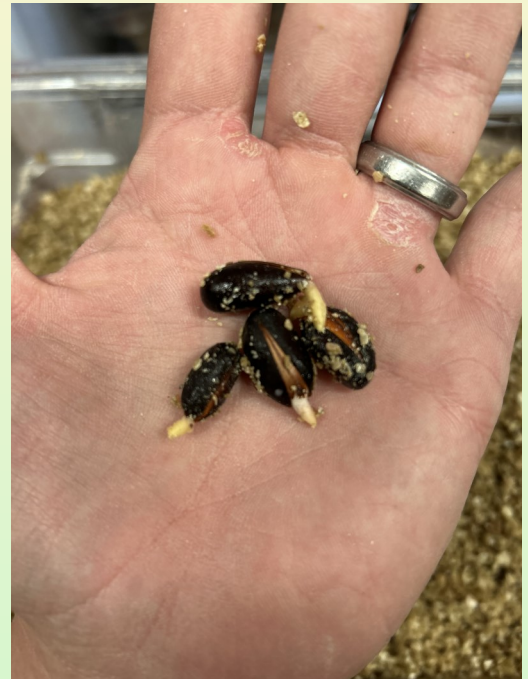


Replanting Hope in the Tamarack Fire Scar

WEPD participated in the Third Annual Arbor Day Tree Planting at Curtz Lake, which was a powerful display of environmental stewardship and community unity. This year's event focused on reforesting areas impacted by the Tamarack Fire, with volunteers and partners working together to restore the landscape and promote long-term forest health! This event was organized by the Forest Health Community Working Group in partnership with the Washoe Tribe, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Sugar Pine Foundation, Liberty Utilities, and the Alpine Watershed Group.

Event Highlights

- WEPD donated 200 Pinyon Pine Seeds, and 25 Pinyon Pine Seedlings for the event. Participants also planted 1,000 Jeffrey pine in the scarred zones left by the Tamarack Fire. They were chosen for their resilience and ecological value, and cultural importance.
- Nearly 150 Community Members Attended - Local residents, students, environmental advocates, and Tribal youth showed up in strong numbers to make a tangible impact on the land they call home. Special thanks to the Washoe Conservation Corp for staff assisting with planting.





Lake Tahoe Forum Guide

By Kristina Burnette—Environmental Scientist

Over the past few months, WEPD has been working with a group of partnering agencies, called the Tahoe Basin Recovery Implementation Team, to discuss some concerns about the future of Lake Tahoe. Agencies have been working on projects throughout the Tahoe Basin to provide game fish and to reintroduce Lahontan Cutthroat trout back into the lake. With these projects and game fish, many of the agencies have received questions from the public about the things that are going on and we have all answered for the very first public meeting.

On April 17, 2025, WEPD, USFWS, NDOW, CDFW, LTBMU, Tahoe Sport Fishing, Trophy Trout, and others were in attendance for the first Tahoe Forum Guides Meeting. WEPD presented with a presentation that focused on goals for LCT reintroduction and how the vision of Lake Tahoe was to be more towards native species instead of game fisheries. Other departments focused more on discussing projects they are currently work on and projects they are planning for the future. One main goal that everyone seems to be on board with is LCT reintroduction and for LCT to be able to sustain its own populations without human interaction. Reintroduction of LCT is still pretty new to Lake Tahoe so the efforts that each agency is looking towards for LCT is great news.

The anglers and guides that were present at the meeting did have some concerns which each agency addressed. Their concerns focused on the future of fisheries and species of the lake, beaver impacts on tributaries and spawning habitats, de-watering concerns, not seeing larger size LCT, and most importantly, anglers and guides are excited about the LCT and want to see them grow. They are even supportive of the Washoe Tribe in regards to bringing back LCT to catchable sizes and being back in Lake Tahoe.

Overall, the meeting was a great way for the public to get a better understanding about the things going on in Lake Tahoe. The dream for the Washoe community is to remove all non-native fish species from Lake Tahoe but overall, it is practically impossible with the size of the lake and there is a possibility that it could cause more harm than good. Right now, the best thing for the lake is to continue stocking the lake of LCT, removal of aquatic invasive species, and monitoring. More meetings will happen so if you want to voice your concerns or have questions for the next meeting, please reach out to kristina.burnette@washoetribe.us. No date has been set for the next meeting as of May 5, 2025.



Geographic Information System (GIS) Mobile Course at Lake Tahoe Community College

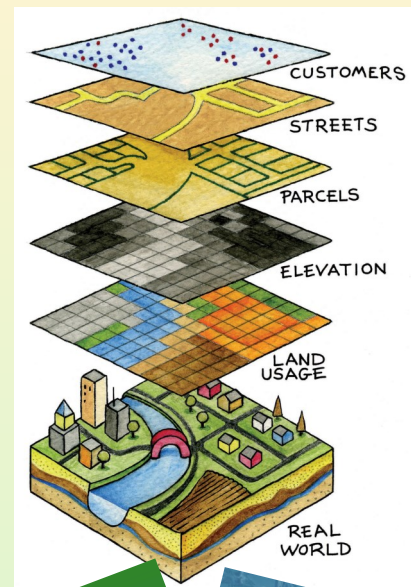
By Chloe Menzies, Environmental Specialist



WEPD is building staff capacity to help understand, document, and protect Tribal Lands. Wouldn't it be cool if you were able to easily report Environmental Hazards from your phone using a survey that records your exact geographic location so that the hazard can be remedied? With Mobile Geographic Information Systems, you can! Environmental Specialist, Chloe Menzies, has working on increasing WEPD's capacity to improve the departments ability to survey new and existing areas for environmental hazards, ideas for restoration projects, and places where they had difficulty accessing Tribal lands/parcels. These skills help the department have a stronger understanding of the land and natural resources we strive to protect, what the Tribe is interested in regarding restoration projects and ideas, and share with other agencies, when appropriate.



Mobile GIS includes the use of different apps to make data collection and analysis much easier and more efficient! The different apps are, Survey 123 and Field Maps, both of which allows you to create surveys that can be used on or offline, so with or without service, to collect data. For example, if WEPD wanted to know how many and what kind wildlife are observed by Tribal members, we can now create and deploy a survey that will allow Tribal members to take pictures and write notes about the species they see, all while capturing their precise geographic location! The apps ability to collect geographic locations both on and offline is so beneficial especially in the remote areas of Nevada where service is scarce. WEPD is excited to utilize these new tools in our existing and future projects!



What is California SB-310?

By Kyle Leslie Tabor-Cooper a.k.a Sele-Qui-Til
Environmental Specialist, Nooksack Tribal

How does the state of California define Cultural Burning?

Cultural burn or cultural burning means the intentional application of fire to land by a California Native American tribe, a tribal organization, or a cultural fire practitioner to achieve cultural goals or objectives, including for sustenance, ceremonial activities, biodiversity, or other benefits.

How can the Washoe Tribe utilize SB-310?

1. Reach an agreement with California Natural Resources Agency.
2. Reach an agreement with local air district in the project area(s)
3. Develop a Designee/ certifying Cultural Burn Practitioners program
4. Have land access agreement with property owner

What if we cant reach an agreement?

"In the event of a disagreement between a local air district and a tribe in developing or implementing an agreement, the Secretary for Environmental Protection shall assist in resolving the disagreement. "

The "Act for the Government and Protection of Indians," enacted in 1850, was a California law that facilitated the displacement of Native Americans from their traditional lands, regulated their employment, redefined criminal activity, and essentially resulted in their forced servitude, according to PBS.

Table 1. Population Estimates for California, 1848–1910

Year	California Native Population	U.S. Native Population	California Non-Native Population
1848	150,000	n.d.	15,000
1850	n.d.	400,764	165,000
1860	35,000	339,421	379,994
1870	30,000	313,712	560,247
1880	20,500	306,543	864,694
1890	16,624	248,253	1,213,398
1900	15,377	237,196	1,485,053
1910	16,371	265,683	2,377,549

Sources: Stuart, *Nations within a Nation*, 52, 54, 57; Hyslop and Miller, *California*, 30; Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*, 194; Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival*, 109; Rawls, *Indians of California*, 171, 214. Data exclude Native peoples of Alaska and Hawaii.

Reaching an agreement with CNRA and local air districts stands in lieu of:

"(A)The state permitting or regulatory requirements "

("B)The burn plan requirements in subdivision (e) of Section 4500. "

Agreements reached will allow the tribe to receive California state claims fund for liability protection.

What is a Cultural Burn Practitioner?

A person recognized by a California Native American tribe or organization for their experience using fire to achieve cultural goals—such as sustenance, ceremony, biodiversity, or other traditional benefits.

California Air Districts



How to Become a Cultural Burn Practitioner

- Tribe designates an approving body (e.g., Tribal Council, WCRAC, Elders, WEPD).
- Identify areas of specialty (e.g., meadows, riparian zones, willows, bushlands, forests).
- Establish a form of recognition for inter-agency use (e.g., ID card, certificate).
- Submit a record of cultural burn experience (e.g., ceremonial burns, personal land stewardship).
- Attend public cultural burn workshops (TBA) and keep records for both Tribal and personal documentation.

The BIA Tamarack Fire Weed Treatment Project Update

By Environmental Scientist, John Warpeha



The photo shows a 2022 fire line along Leviathan Mine Road that was excavated by federal agencies to slow the Tamarack Fire.

The 2021 Tamarack Fire affected 68,600 acres and burned Private Indian Allotment Land south of Leviathan Mine Road. Fire crews from various agencies like the BIA addressed the fire and cut extensive fire lines to slow the fires spread. Several sections of these fire lines have developed colonies of the noxious weed Hoary cress, which is a legally regulated weed and a perennial mustard. Agency fire equipment is normally cleaned of weed seed before fire equipment is transported to other established fires. This weed forms a white flower and is commonly referred to as short white top. This species is non-native and is from western Asia. Hoary cress is the most common noxious weed in the Carson Valley and on Tribal lands in Gardnerville. Hoary cress easily displaces Washoe culturally important plants if allowed to spread uncontrolled. WEPD staff have treated this noxious weed under the BIA Tamarack Fire Grant for several years within these fire lines and will continue to treat and monitor these infestations in 2025. Hoary cress, like many weeds, thrives on mineral soil disturbance like fire line construction. Hoary cress comes up very early in the spring. It reproduces by roots and seeds so it needs to be treated since pulling the stems will cause them to quickly regrow from their roots. The treatment of weeds over time can reduce and eliminate their

adverse affect on native plants. The planting of native grass seed and other species can compete with weeds like Hoary cress.



The blue dye shows where Hoary cress was treated, which is one of the most common noxious weeds in western Nevada.



L	A	K	E	T	A	H	O	E	Q	M
E	T	A	M	A	R	A	C	K	B	I
A	P	I	N	Y	O	N	P	I	N	E
R	L	O	H	T	E	S	U	O	H	P
T	A	S	D	A	Y	H	T	R	A	E
H	N	E	V	A	D	A	D	N	H	U
D	A	C	M	A	P	S	G	I	R	S
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T	H	H	P	L	A	N	T	I	N	G
C	U	S	E	H	S	U	O	H	P	B

WORDS TO FIND:

- TAMARACK
- PERENNIAL
- ARCGIS
- NEVADA
- MAPS
- EARTH DAY
- PLANTING
- HOOP HOUSES
- PINYON PINE
- LAKE TAHOE
- (HINT: SOME WORDS ARE SPELLED BACKWARDS)



WEPD RECYCLE NEWS

WEPD's Modified Transfer Station is located at: 1000 Memdewee Run, Gardnerville, NV



WE ACCEPT:

Paper, Tin cans, Aluminum
Large Household Appliances
Plastic bottles, Unbroken Glass
Magazines, Bicycles



Cardboard **(NO PIZZA BOXES!!!)**



WARNING



T-STATION
UNDER
VIDEO

SURVEILLANCE

NO TRASH

WE DO NOT ACCEPT:

- ⊗ **Small Household Appliances** (anything with a power cord)
- ⊗ **Hazardous Household Waste**
(oil, anti-freeze, batteries, fluorescent lights, aerosol cans, etc.)
- ⊗ **TIRES**
- ⊗ Plastic grocery bags, furniture, mattresses, construction materials, Styrofoam, medical waste or any other trash