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To•La (To Grow from the Roots)

Applying Organization	Native Roots Network, Inc.	Application Date	5/13/2026
Applying Contact	Jonathon Freeman	Status	Submitted
Record Type	Member Collective	Created By	Jonathon Freeman, 5/13/2026, 6:06 PM
		Create Account	<input type="checkbox"/>

Project Overview

Project Name	To•La (To Grow from the Roots)	Requested Amount	\$50,000.00
Project/Campaign Name	To•La (To Grow from the Roots)		
Type of Project	Restoration	Project Multiple Locations	
Project Location (State or Territory)	CA	Longitude	122.211193
Latitude	40.6952664 122.2074301		

Organization Details

Organization Name	Native Roots Network	Primary address for organization	14000 Cub Trail Redding, California 96003 United States
Contact Name	Jonathon Freeman	Contact Title	Director of Strategy and Innovation
Contact Email Address	jonathon@nativerootsnetwork.org		
Annual Operating Budget	\$927,916.00	Tax Status/Organization Type	501c3 Organization
Staff Size	6	Main Phone	530 604 5157
Total Membership	100	Organization Website/Social Media Feed	https://www.nativerootsnetwork.org/ nativeroots_net @instagram
BIPOC-led	Yes	C-Suite Staff	Board: All Indigenous Board of Directors, 2 women, 1 LGBTQ+ Male. Staff: 5 of 6 staff are Indigenous, 4 are female

Grant Details

Awarded Amount		Awarded Date	
Funding Program			
Primary Project Type		Secondary Project Type	
Term Start Date		Term End Date	

Proposal Questions

Mission/History Of Organization	Our mission is to advance Indigenous-led pathways for just and vibrant communities.	Location Details	Wenem To•s, a Wintu term meaning "middle place," is the name given to the land we are dedicated to protecting and
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Native Roots Network aims to build stronger, more vibrant communities by preserving and perpetuating traditional Indigenous culture, restoring lands and traditional food sources, and developing sustainable, culturally centered enterprises to amplify Indigenous voices and provide for our community's needs.

Emerging out of the lineage of community based organizing, NRN's has its beginnings in youth leadership and arts, and has since developed a comprehensive program that supports a land based approach designed to cultivate ecosystem sustainability. Serving as a nexus of traditional wisdom, cultural innovation, and cross-cultural education, Native Roots Network brings together culture bearers, community leaders, artists, and wisdom keepers to inspire, collaborate, and learn from one another, working collectively to create a more just, sustainable, and interconnected world.

restoring. Located at the northern end of the Great Sacramento River Valley, the site serves as a transition zone between valley floor and foothills, just one mile south of the Shasta Trinity National Forest and Shasta Lake. The land contains rich biodiversity, including five species of oak, two pine species, willows, buttonwillow, grapevine, redbud, Ceanothus, manzanita, and other native plants that bridge lower valley and foothill ecosystems. The land is threaded by two stream systems, supporting deer, rabbits, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, occasional bears, raptors, bald eagles, and migratory songbirds.

Historically, this area was stewarded by the Yana and Wintu peoples until the arrival of settlers, leading to a dark period of genocide that devastated Indigenous communities. The survivors were dispossessed of their lands, facilitated by the denial of a critical treaty that promised a 35-square-mile reservation, part of 18 "unratified treaties" in California. Subsequent settler activities, including homesteading and agricultural development, left their marks and transitioned from abandoned homesteads to seasonal cattle grazing. In the early 2000s, the land was sold and used for a more disruptive use: an ATV park and shooting range. In recent years, the land housed a substance rehabilitation working ranch, which unfortunately exacerbated land degradation through overgrazing, compaction, and pollution.

NRN rematriated the 1209-acre parcel in December 2024, with the goal of restoring and rehabilitating the land through traditional ecological knowledge and contemporary ecological science. We have established monitoring points, restoration zones, and places of cultural practice to guide strategic remediation efforts and track ecological recovery over time. Current work focuses on stabilizing the most degraded areas, restoring native biodiversity, improving watershed health, reducing wildfire risk, and rebuilding ecological resilience. Through this work, we aim not only to heal damaged ecosystems, but to renew Wenem To's as a thriving cultural and ecological landscape for future generations.

Final Success Final success for our project is the restoration of 1209 acres of mixed oak woodland savanna, at the watershed's apex totaling 9.5 miles of streams and creeks, rejuvenating land degraded by hog raising and livestock overgrazing, resulting in greater soil water retention, healthy waterways, flourishing native plants, and access to traditional foods.

Impact on Climate and Biodiversity

Through the combination of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and contemporary land management practices, our restoration aims to build land based climate resilience in our region. A successful project would principally revitalize the soil and rehabilitate the land's relationship with water. The impact will come directly from, where necessary, reintroducing

perennial grasses and other indigenous plants adapted to withstand heat, fire, and drought conditions. The grasses and plants will improve the land's water retention capacity and enrich the soil with organic matter, strengthening the longevity of the heritage oaks and feeding our culture ways for generations to come.

These restorative efforts will impact resiliency through facilitating the stabilization of water movement through the land, mitigating the occurrence of flash flooding by reducing rapid water runoff and diminishing the land's vulnerability to rapid drying. As a result, the soil will be better equipped to both retain and gradually release water, providing a more steady flow to the ecosystem during dry periods. With more water held in the land, the biodiversity and abundance will be enhanced.

NRN is currently working and building partnerships with agencies and organizations to help bring expertise and resources to ensure the success of the project. Partners include Point Blue Soil Conservation for a Soil Health Plan and CalFire to develop a Vegetation Treatment Plan. NRN is formalizing collaborations with Shasta College for student projects and college credit, Western Shasta Resource Conservation District for project support, and Shasta Fire Safe Council with the development of Prescribed Burn Association. Summer of 2026, we will launch the Yəkila (Blue Oak Acorn) Program; our 8-week Land Stewardship Cohort which will provide hands-on culturally-centered TEK training at Wenem To•s to young adults to develop enduring land connectivity and knowledge.

Effectively, a successful project will regenerate soil, water, and tree health at our site and youth enrichment and education will continue to radiate these pathways to other protected lands in future generations.

Expected Economic & Recreational Impact

Our project's success is aimed at achieving meaningful value-aligned economic impacts rooted in our Aconomics framework; a holistic strategy to build and support a healthy, resilient community and reciprocal relationship with the earth. We envision workforce development through the lens of Indigenous reciprocity and care. Our Yəkila cohort this summer will contribute to land restoration while learning skills aligned with our Indigenous community's values and understanding of reciprocal relationship with the land. Our recreation takes the form of re-creating: re-creating connection to land, cultural wisdom, and each other. Yəkila will care for oak

Strategy & Timeline For Final Success

Strategic land remediation efforts have already commenced at Wenem To•s. Since Native Roots Network rematriated the site, our team has prioritized stabilization and rejuvenation. Many of us are originally from this area, and our ancestors' DNA lives within the soil. Our mission is to heal the land and restore its role as a biodiverse and ecologically resilient habitat, rebalancing ecosystems disrupted by years of misuse and neglect.

During 2026–2027, our strategy includes skill-building and training, establishing partnerships, community workshops, workforce development, surveying and

woodlands, strengthening healthier oaks that produce healthier acorns. When we gather and reintegrate acorns into our diets, we become healthier too.

By incorporating TEK with contemporary restoration techniques, our TEK Workforce Development project will empower young adult community members through active engagement in land management. The project will also transform “waste” wood materials from restoration activities into sustainable products through our on-site “Bison Lab” digital fabrication shop. Cohort participants will learn to prune, coppice, and thin trees and shrubs to promote ecosystem health and cultural food and fiber practices, gather usable material, and shape it with woodworking and digital fabrication tools to develop sustainable products. Remaining waste wood will be converted into biochar for land restoration and revenue generation.

These practices will improve vegetation, soil, and water health, creating healthier downstream conditions. Our work will also enhance opportunities for local Indigenous cultural practitioners to gather materials used in traditional medicines, foods, and crafts in a region where land access is often limited due to private and government ownership.

monitoring, erosion control, infrastructure adaptation, revegetation preparation, sustainable business practices, and community-based employment opportunities.

Skill-Building and Training: Throughout 2026, we have participated in collaborative meetings and training sessions with Native Californian tribes and organizations including Redbud Resource Group, Sierra Institute, and Pit River Tribe. Staff are undergoing trainings related to land restoration and cultural burns planned for fall 2026 and spring 2027. To prepare for cultural burning, we partnered with CalFire to develop a Vegetation Treatment Plan. With the plan in place, we hope to begin burns by late fall 2026.

Establishing Lasting Partnerships: Formal partnerships with CalFire and Point Blue Conservation Science have already been established. Additional partnerships with Shasta Fire Safe Council, Sierra Institute, and Western Shasta Resource Conservation District are being developed to strengthen restoration efforts through training, technical assistance, regulatory support, and workforce capacity.

Community Workshops: Throughout 2026 and 2027, we will continue hosting TEK workshops for local “Co-Lab” community members demonstrating land restoration practices, cultural plant cultivation, and small-scale cultural burning. Workshops follow the seasonal calendar and align with traditional ecological knowledge practices.

Workforce Crew Development: This summer, we will launch our pilot young-adult TEK-based land restoration cohort, Yəkila. Participants will learn hands-on restoration practices including replanting perennial native plants and supporting culturally vital species such as redbud, willow, and oak. They will also help prepare the land for cultural burning this fall. Yəkila, the Wintu name for the blue oak acorn, symbolizes the potential of our youth when nurtured. Supporting the acorn’s resurgence affirms the continuation of our cultural lifeways.

Surveying and Monitoring: NRN staff established 10 monitoring points in 2025 to document ecological and cultural restoration progress. In 2026, NRN partnered with Point Blue to establish six formal soil, vegetation, and bird monitoring sites for long-term evaluation.

Erosion Control: We continue stabilizing soils impacted by erosion through increased ground cover and erosion-control structures such as wattles, check

dams, and terracing near creek beds and areas affected by overgrazing and compaction.

Infrastructure Adaptation: We deconstructed former hog pen infrastructure and are restoring the site, which had become a source of pollution and sediment within the watershed.

Preparation for Revegetation: In partnership with CalFire and Point Blue, we are developing a Vegetation Treatment Plan to support the reintroduction of cultural fire and holistic land management practices.

Community-Based Employment Opportunities: We are creating employment opportunities for community members, especially 8–10 young adults through our land restoration team. Our rural area offers limited employment for youth. By creating pathways for education, training, trade schools, and junior college access, we aim to strengthen both the land and the next generation.

Promoting Sustainable Business Practices: NRN is supporting the development of a regenerative economy using sustainable products from land management activities. Staff and community members have completed technology and shop training to prepare for production and future teaching opportunities. This year we will continue developing sustainable business practices that integrate TEK, biodiversity, and community stewardship.

We are cultivating a climate-resilient landscape during increasing climate instability. Low snowpack and heavy warm rains have heightened the threat of catastrophic wildfire across the landscape we are restoring, posing challenges to our work. Political and economic instability continue to impact funding sources and agency partners. Point Blue, for example, reduced monitoring sites from six to three due to federal funding cuts, requiring us to secure additional funds to maintain six sites. Rising food and gas prices have placed strain on local families, limiting participation in events and trainings. We are in a time when land stewardship and community space is vital to counteract our fragmentation. Our work with the support of the TCA grant will greatly forward this.

Engagement from community businesses would be incredibly helpful for the young people we are working with in the Yəkila project in securing proper landwork attire: boots, work pants, long sleeve work shirts, water bottles and

Key Decision Makers N/A. Privately rematriated land

Working With Business Community

packs. We hope to make those partnerships moving forward. We are also looking for more sustainable ways to transport tools and staff out to restoration sites on the land. Support from local businesses to help us secure battery powered side by sides and off road equipment that we could charge on our solar system and help us reduce our need on hydrocarbon energy supplies would be a tremendous boost. We would love to be in partnership with TCA member organizations moving forward to help us achieve our goals.

Elevate Voices

Native Roots Network is a community-based, Indigenous-led organization rooted in our central value-based development framework: Acornomics. Our work is grounded in intergenerational and intercultural relationship-building, from the land to the people.

We regularly engage with local, state-wide, and international communities through workshops, presentations, speaking engagements, and hands-on learning opportunities that center TEK and culturally informed land stewardship practices. We hold monthly Collaborative Laboratory (Co-Lab) meetings with consistent ~50 person local resident attendance, and are actively expanding our circle to enrich our solidarity economy. NRN also maintains a Community Stakeholder Structure with monthly meetings to gather input from local community-oriented public and private organizations.

Throughout the year, we host gatherings, retreats, and cultural convenings. This year we hosted multiple events including our annual Autumn's End gathering, Pit River Council gatherings, and will host the 100 person 1-week Seeding Sovereignty retreat in June. These events create opportunities for Indigenous peoples and communities of color to share knowledge, build solidarity, and practice cultural traditions on the land at Wenem To's.

Our To•La project will maintain our mission of centering Indigenous knowledge and land stewardship while elevating youth leadership in our local community.

Measurable On-Ground Outcomes

- 8-10 specific sites ranging between .5 to 5 acres in size prepared; pruned, mowed, trimmed for plant and water way restoration and or cultural burning.
- Approximately 40-250 acres burned with cultural and prescribed fire to encourage soil and vegetation health and renewal.
- Land team and community members will have learned traditional land practices through 6-8 community workshops.
- Materials have been gathered for traditional food and fiber craft, including traditional basket making materials such willow and redbud, and food such as acorn. Additionally our first wood craft products from our Bison Lab will be available for purchase at the annual Native Craft Fair in December.
- Yekila project pilot cohort completed and second cohort planned and funded.

TCA Funding Plan

TCA support will provide critical infrastructure and operational capacity to advance the restoration and long-term stewardship of the 1,209 acres of Wenem To's while ensuring the continuation of Yekila into 2027. Funding will support a full-time Land Manager position and the 2027 Land Restoration Team, strengthening on-the-ground coordination, ecological monitoring, and

Confidential Items

Nothing confidential

ongoing care of the site. Grant funds will also support the purchase of a greenhouse for native plant propagation, a portable biochar kiln to improve soil health and reduce wildfire fuels, and portable electric fencing to protect sensitive restoration areas from neighboring cattle overgrazing. Additional support will fund mapping, monitoring, and other technical services, as well as compensate cultural practitioners who will share traditional ecological knowledge, cultural teachings, and land stewardship practices with youth and Native Roots community.

**Other Relevant
Application Details**

