

November is Native American Heritage Month

October was a great month with good visitation and lots of activities. Thank you to the volunteers, Boosters cooperating association, staff, and park merchants for putting on a great Fall Festival, Halloween, and Dia de los Muertos. You all are truly great to make the history of early San Diego come alive for visitors. The State Historic Park is certainly a leader and driving force in the community for providing activities this fun time of year.

November is Native American Heritage Month. As the State Park works on plans for the Immediate Public Use (IPU) former CalTrans property, turning it into open space park land, a key component is the involvement of the Kumeyaay Nation. Staff, including Nicole Turner, District Archaeologist, Marla Mealy, Southern Service Center Archaeologist, Karen Beery, Interpretive Manager, and Nancy Mendez, Interpretive Specialist, have been working on creative planning and diligently getting input from the Native Americans on the project.

The creation accounts of the local Kumeyaay Indians tell them that their ancestors were placed in this area by the creator and they have been here since the beginning of time. They were living in the area of Old Town San Diego prior to the arrival of the Spanish explorers centuries ago and before the construction of the Mission in 1769. Their presence in Old Town continued well into the American Period. The Kumeyaay presence and importance to the daily operations of the town is apparent in the abundant archaeological remains found throughout the various households associated with the Mexican and American periods of Old Town San Diego.

As we gather information from the Kumeyaay related to the IPU project, we hope to incorporate it into more programs and website information in the State Historic Park for visitors to celebrate the significant contributions, rich ancestry, and traditions of Native Americans.

Richard Dennison, Park Superintendent