

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024



**Prepared By:**

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*Executive Director*

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# About Us

Indian Cultural Organization's mission is to advance community resilience through traditional lifeways, and protect and restore the native species, waters, and homelands of the Winnemem Wintu.

Indian Cultural Organization (ICO) has served northern California since it was incorporated by Caleen Sisk and Maude Rogers Nightingale in 1983. Multi-generational and tribally-led, ICO prioritizes youth participation in projects to support Winnemem Wintu cultural resilience.



# Our Vision

The work of ICO and all of its programs follow the guidance and vision of Caleen Sisk, the Chief and spiritual leader of our tribe, the Winnemem Wintu. The ICO Board of Directors consists of dedicated volunteers, including multiple generations of Winnemem Wintu tribal members, who oversee and assist in the work of the organization. Answering to the board and Chief is the Executive Director, also a tribal member, who works closely with our ICO Office Staff, bookkeeper, and Project Managers.



## ICO Board Members

Ron Toppi  
*Board Chair*

Helene Sisk  
Misa Joo  
Sarah Haase  
Jamie Ward  
Jerod Ward

## Cultural Monitors

Nick Wilson  
*Supervisor*

Jesse Sisk  
Jamie Ward  
Robert Wilson  
Daniel Scholfield

## ICO Office Staff

Dessa Drake  
*Executive Director*

Mark Miyoshi  
*Tribal Historic  
Preservation Officer*

Darlene Sisk  
*Administrative  
Assistant*

Betti Comas  
*Human Resources  
Consultant*

## Salmon Restoration Team

Rebekah Olstad  
*Project Manager*

Marine Sisk  
*Cultural Resource &  
Fisheries Supervisor*

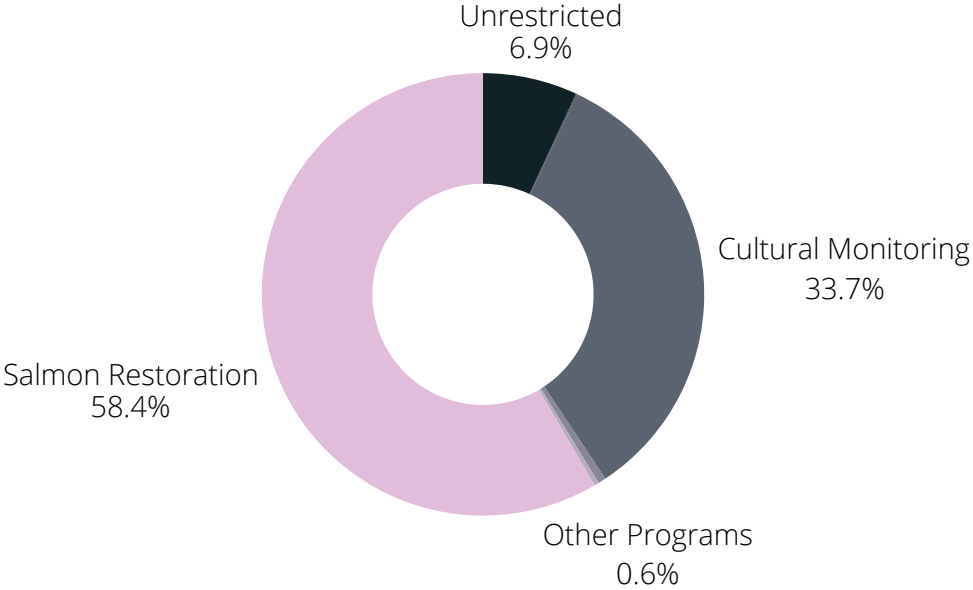
*Cultural Resource  
Specialists:*

Cassandra Curl  
Arron Sisk  
Nina Sisk  
Gabriel Ward  
Michelle Lent  
Valerie Lent

Desiree Morse-Foley

# A Year in Review

ICO’s biggest project this year was our co-stewardship with California Department of Fish and Wildlife for salmon restoration on the Winnemem Waywaket (McCloud River). We were able to employ Winnemem Wintu and neighboring tribal members all year to directly tend the Nur (salmon) eggs and participate in other cultural resource tasks, with plans to continue through 2026.



### FY 2023-2024 Income

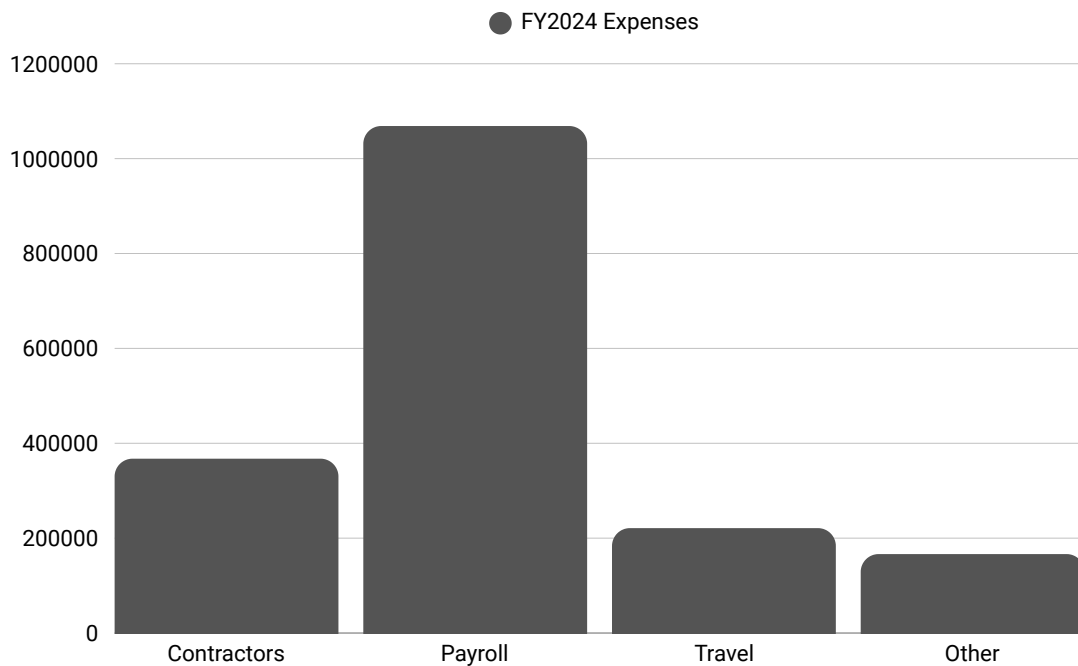
We also employed tribal members as cultural monitors at the Dunsmuir rail yard site. In May, the cultural resource specialists (CRSs) from our salmon restoration team, as well as our monitors, took place in traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) training with California Open Lands.

This training will assist our CRSs in future work to restore the Winnemem Waywaket, while at the Dunsmuir site we have negotiated with Union Pacific Railroad to be a part of the restoration plan along the Nontipom Waywaket (Sacramento River).

## INDIAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Other programs the Winnemem Wintu supported through ICO this year included our eighth year of the Run4Salmon prayer journey, in which we retraced the historic route of the salmon from our homelands at the base of Buliyum Puyuuk (Mt. Shasta) all the way to Ohlone territory in the Bay Delta. We cycled, rode on horseback, paddled, ran, and walked to raise awareness of the importance of the health of our waterways in order for our salmon to return.

ICO also worked to address historical trauma within the tribe and improve internal communications by bringing in consultants specializing in nonviolent communication. These consultants will continue to provide training and mediation services through next year.



ICO is proud to have been able to employ so many of our own tribal members this year and is extremely grateful to them, our donors, grant partners, and contractors that assisted us in all our endeavors in 2024.

# Looking Ahead

**As a nonprofit of a non-federally recognized tribe, ICO relies on public donations and grant funding to support our work.**

As we look ahead to this next year, one priority of ICO is properly documenting and preserving Winnemem Wintu culture. We have begun work on our own Winnemem Wintu tribal archives and a dictionary of the Winnemem Wintu language, but additional funding is needed to successfully get these projects completed.

In our salmon restoration work, we continue to seek funding for a volitional passageway that will allow the salmon to bypass Shasta Dam. We would also like to build a tribal fishery along our river that will assist in rematriating our ancestral Nur from New Zealand.

ICO would also like to better support the work of our tribal historic preservation officer, as well as other ICO staff that ensure our organization and its programs run smoothly.

A new project sponsored by our sister nonprofit, Sawalmem, is a school for Winnemem youth. Funding through ICO would help compensate and honor our elders serving as teachers in the school and other ICO employees advising the project.

In addition, we seek support for Chief Sisk in her advocacy work at the international level on behalf of unrecognized tribes like the Winnemem Wintu at the United Nations.

Two projects ICO is excited to have already secured funding for in this next year include a grant for building tribal capacity that will allow us to hire a grant writer, and a grant through the state of California to assist us in the planning and development of our own sustainable, fire-resilient tribal eco-village on recently acquired Winnemem Wintu lands.

# Join Us

If you would like to learn more information about Indian Cultural Organization or would like to donate to support the work we do, please see our contact information below or scan the QR codes for a quick link.



[info@winnemem.org](mailto:info@winnemem.org)



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Visit our Website



Donate to ICO

