

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF



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# restore

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE CACHE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

# restory

AUDIO TOUR INTERVIEW WITH

*Wyatt Cline*

STOP 2:

*The Wetlands*



## Stop 2: The Wetlands

### **Can you describe where we are and what you see and hear around you?**

We are here at the pond's edge, the water's edge, looking at the different water grasses and the islands and watching the fishing birds do their job and the frogs jumping in the water.

### **What do you appreciate about being here right now?**

What I appreciate about being here right now is the peacefulness. There's a calmness about it and the sounds. Everybody's working before it's time to go to bed, whether it's the frogs or the birds, everybody's working.

### **How do you imagine this place would have looked before European explorers arrived? What would this place have looked like?**

I think this place, before Europeans arrived, I think this place would have looked a little different. The water would be in a streambed. You would still have the same fishing birds. You would still have the same bugs, grasses, tules and trees, but they would be set a little different because they'd be along a stream bank and not recreated in a gravel pit although it's beautiful.

### **How do you think the local Native people used this area before Europeans came?**

Well I think the local Native people before the entrance of or introduction of the European people lived here of course and that meant that they farmed fish, farmed tubers and seeds and cultivated, made a living, made their breads, traded, basically recreated. People never talk about that. You can look out there and see kids falling off a log and ladies chatting with their feet in the water after a hard day's work, pulling the pollen off of the cattails you know to put in the bread and make it taste a little different, kind of good. Things like that.

### **How do the local Native people use this area now?**

I think the local Native people come today to recreate and pause for reflection at this beautiful place and they have a wonderful Tending and Gathering Garden for the basket weavers and I believe that's used.

### **When you look out and see what's in this garden do you recognize any of the plants and grasses and what they might be used for?**

I recognize some of the bunch grasses, but I'm not a basket weaver. Marshall McKay can tell you about that.

### **You got it. How did you learn about Native cultural traditions?**

The way I learned of Native cultural traditions, the ones that I do know, from my grandfather. Both my grandfathers were Native American or partially Native American. I spent many, many hours and days; I was blessed to be with my grandfather Wilbur Cline whose grandfather was Northern Wintun and they came here to Capay Valley, actually Yolo County in the 1860s I believe and I was able to spend hours and a lot of time with my grandfather in the hills and along the creek fishing and hunting and he would teach me about plants; milkweed for poison oak, bay leaves to chew, on and on. Mountain balm make you salivate and so you wouldn't drink water and many other things. That's how I learned and he learned from his father.

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**What does this place look like now?**

Where we're sitting now at the nature preserve on the edge of the water here it's very natural looking. It's maybe a little staged. As it matures you'll lose that, but it's pretty. It's absolutely beautiful. You can imagine people using it in industry making food.

**You mentioned before that it wasn't always this way. You talked about how it probably was. This part wasn't here. What was this area like when you first came around here and why has it changed?**

This area that we're sitting in front of is a pond, which it is now, was actually a gravel pit as I understand it. When I saw it, it was a pit in the ground where gravel had been extracted and it's certainly changed from a hole in the ground with dirt and some old gravel to a place with a beautiful riparian area.

**When you think about this Tending and Gathering Garden and what it's taken to make it happen here, what does it represent to you to have a Tending and Gathering Garden on this preserve?**

I think what the Tending and Gathering Garden represents to me, the most important or what comes to my mind first is the collaboration of people it took to make it happen and also it's the continuation of a cultural practice of the Native people and it's going to be shared for generations with school children, new Native basket weavers and old Native basket weavers and it gives you a place to reflect. It's an old new place and I think that that's what comes to mind first, but a collaborative effort and it's probably been there way for 5,000 to 12,000 years and this just happens to be here today. It's a rebirth and an introduction for many people who wouldn't understand what a Tending and Gathering Garden is.

**When you say that you imagine that it took a lot of collaboration, why do you say that?**

I believe it took a lot of collaboration because it took collaboration of the Native peoples to agree to have a Tending and Gathering Garden in a public place. It took the people that work here at the nature preserve to want to do a Tending and Gathering Garden and agree and recognize the importance of one as not only cultural preservation but as an educational tool to share with school children.

**A lot of people talk about this area as being one that has been restored. I wonder what restoration means to you.**

The question is what restoration means to me. That is a difficult question. When you restore something, generally I think I believe you're bringing it back to where it was. Now that was tough to do here because this was a streambed one time and then it became it looks like some off-course gravel mining and it was a pit, a gravel pit, pretty stark actually. So to restore it they turned it into a wetland area and I would have to say they did a good job. You have Native plants. You have plenty of wildlife. It's very diverse. The whole food chain is here. You have the fisher birds, the fish, the bugs, the frogs, just about anything as it should be. So they restored it back to where it was or where they thought it would be.

*The Wetlands, continued (p.3 of 3)*

**How do you feel about the type of restoration they've done?**

I think – how do I feel about the type of restoration they've done? I think they've done a wonderful job. I mean it had to be a daunting task, not just the planning of it, but to get it started and then the patience to watch it live and thrive. And as it dies and grows and falls apart and rebuilds itself, that's when it will really be restored.

**How do you think this preserve is being restored ecologically, culturally or otherwise?**

I think this is being restored from many different points. It's being restored environmentally. You have a pretty health ecosystem. It's thriving. It's thriving. You can see it and hear it and smell it and you can go catch something and taste it. So it's very, very good environmentally. The ecosystem is in place. Culturally it's amazing actually because it's not just a Gathering and Tending Garden which is a local Native people's garden. It's the culture of the people who came here; the Eurocentric people, the Hudson Bay trappers, the farmers of today, the ranchers. It's everybody. It's who we are and who shares this place and I think that is one of the greatest things about it.