

University of California Cooperative Extension – Mendocino County

Tribal Youth Exchange Promotes STEM and Cultural Knowledge at Hopland Research & Extension Center

In July 2025, the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) hosted the Scotts Valley Tribal Youth Exchange at the Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC), located on the ancestral lands of the Shóqowa People. The two-day program brought together 25 Native youth from the Scotts Valley and Hopland Bands of Pomo Indians for hands-on learning that blended STEM education with Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

Led by UCCE Advisors Ally Sung-Jereczek (Fire and Tribal Land Stewardship) and Dr. Laura Garza Díaz (Water and Climate), with participation from Advisors Christopher Chen, Clebson Gonçalves, Mike Jones, and Helaine Berris, the event introduced youth to environmental science, hydrology, forestry, and agriculture.

Supported by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, First Nations Development Institute, and the Elevate Youth Program, this collaboration provided Tribal youth with exposure to higher education pathways, scientific research, and UC resources. Participants also connected with Tribal leaders and UC faculty to explore how traditional knowledge, and modern science can work together to address environmental challenges.

This event reflects UCCE Mendocino’s ongoing efforts to strengthen Tribal engagement, support youth education, and promote collaborative stewardship of local lands and ecosystems.