

Wiyot Language Comes to Life on Eureka Waterfront Through Cultural Partnership

Wiyot Tribe, City of Eureka, and Ink People unveil signage and projects promoting Soulatluk language and cultural awareness on the Wigi waterfront.

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A partnership between the Wiyot Tribe, the Ink People Center for Arts and Culture, and the City of Eureka is expanding awareness and understanding of Soulatluk, the Wiyot language, through a series of public signs and educational projects in the Eureka Cultural Arts District.

Fifteen signs, now installed along the Wigi (Humboldt Bay) waterfront, highlight Wiyot words for local animals, plants, places, and cultural practices, reflecting the Tribe's deep, ongoing relationship with the coastal environment. Designed in collaboration with tribal cultural experts and local artists, the project supports ongoing efforts to revitalize the Soulatluk language and honor Wiyot ancestral territory. The community is invited to celebrate the signs and the Soulatluk language on Friday, August 15th at 4pm. The celebration will take place at the foot of F Street, on the Eureka boardwalk, where the signs have been installed.

The "Speaking Soulatluk" project, funded by a National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" grant and facilitated by the Ink People, celebrates the cultural richness of our region by centering language revitalization efforts in the Eureka area and is in relationship with ongoing initiatives to support Indigenous visibility and education. The signs, located along the Eureka boardwalk at the foot of F Street and designed by local artist Kay Lopez through careful consultation with Wiyot cultural leaders, feature QR codes that link directly to Wiyot language resources, share images of local flora and fauna, depictions of coastal landscapes, and illustrations of Wiyot coastal cultural practices. The QR codes also link to audio recordings and educational resources, inviting residents and visitors to learn pronunciation and context from Wiyot speakers and cultural leaders.

Other components of this project include Soulatluk language signage on Humboldt Transit Authority buses and a Soulatluk listening station, beautified by a mural painted by local artist David Mata, which will soon be located in the Da Gou Rou Louwi' Cultural Center at 417 Second Street in Old Town, Eureka.

Quote by Ink People Executive Director:

According to Leslie Castellano, the director of the Ink People, “This project celebrates Wiyot culture and creates valuable opportunities for local residents and visitors to be in relationship with the Soulatluk language. This collaborative endeavor centers Indigenous voices, honors cultural knowledge, and uses art as a bridge for connection, nourishing community wellbeing.”

Quote by Mayor Kim Bergel:

The City of Eureka is proud to support Soulatluk language learning through this initiative. By connecting culture and history, this project provides opportunities for us to learn more about one another, ensuring that future generations grow up surrounded by the language and culture of the Wiyot people.

This collaboration builds on years of work by the Wiyot Tribe to further cultural vitality in the region. The signs are part of a growing effort to promote Soulatluk through public art, educational programs, and language workshops. More installations and activities are planned by the Wiyot Tribe throughout the coming year at the Da Gou Rou Louwi Cultural Center. Additionally, the Ink People will continue to support cultural vitality through community storytelling efforts and by nurturing ongoing partnerships in the Eureka Cultural Arts District.

About the Partners

The Wiyot Tribe is the sovereign nation of the Wiyot people, whose traditional territory includes the lower Mad River, Humboldt Bay (Wigi), and the lower Eel River Basin. The Tribe is committed to the revitalization of its language, culture, and lands.

The Ink People Center for Arts and Culture is a community-based arts and culture organization that supports creative expression and cultural equity through its DreamMaker Program, the MARZ youth program, community arts education, and artist-led initiatives.

The City of Eureka is located on California’s North Coast and works in partnership with the Wiyot Tribe and community organizations to promote cultural recognition, inclusivity, and historical justice.

The Wiyot Tribe, the Ink People, the City of Eureka, and Eureka Main Street are partners in supporting the ongoing efforts of the Eureka Cultural Arts District.

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Leslie Castellano, Ink People Executive Director, or Sage Juarez, Ink People Marketing Director.

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