# NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Inherent Sovereignty: Tribal Nations fighting to protect our people and defend our land



“The secret to our success is that we never, never give up.”

- **Wilma Mankiller**
  **Cherokee Nation**

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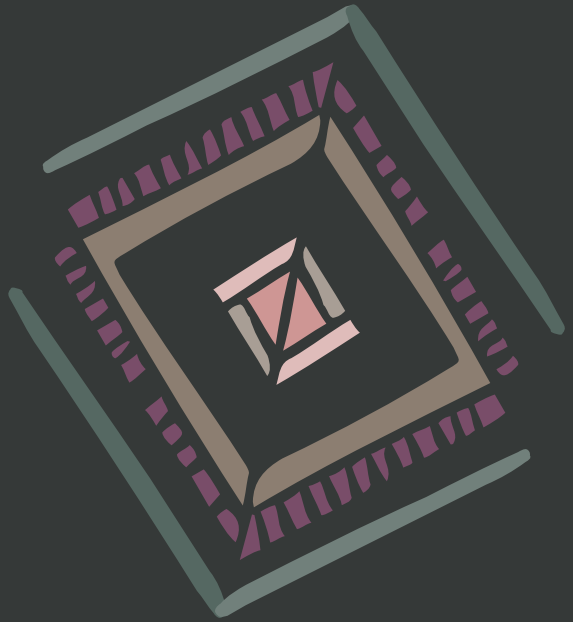
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# 01.

# Land Acknowledgement

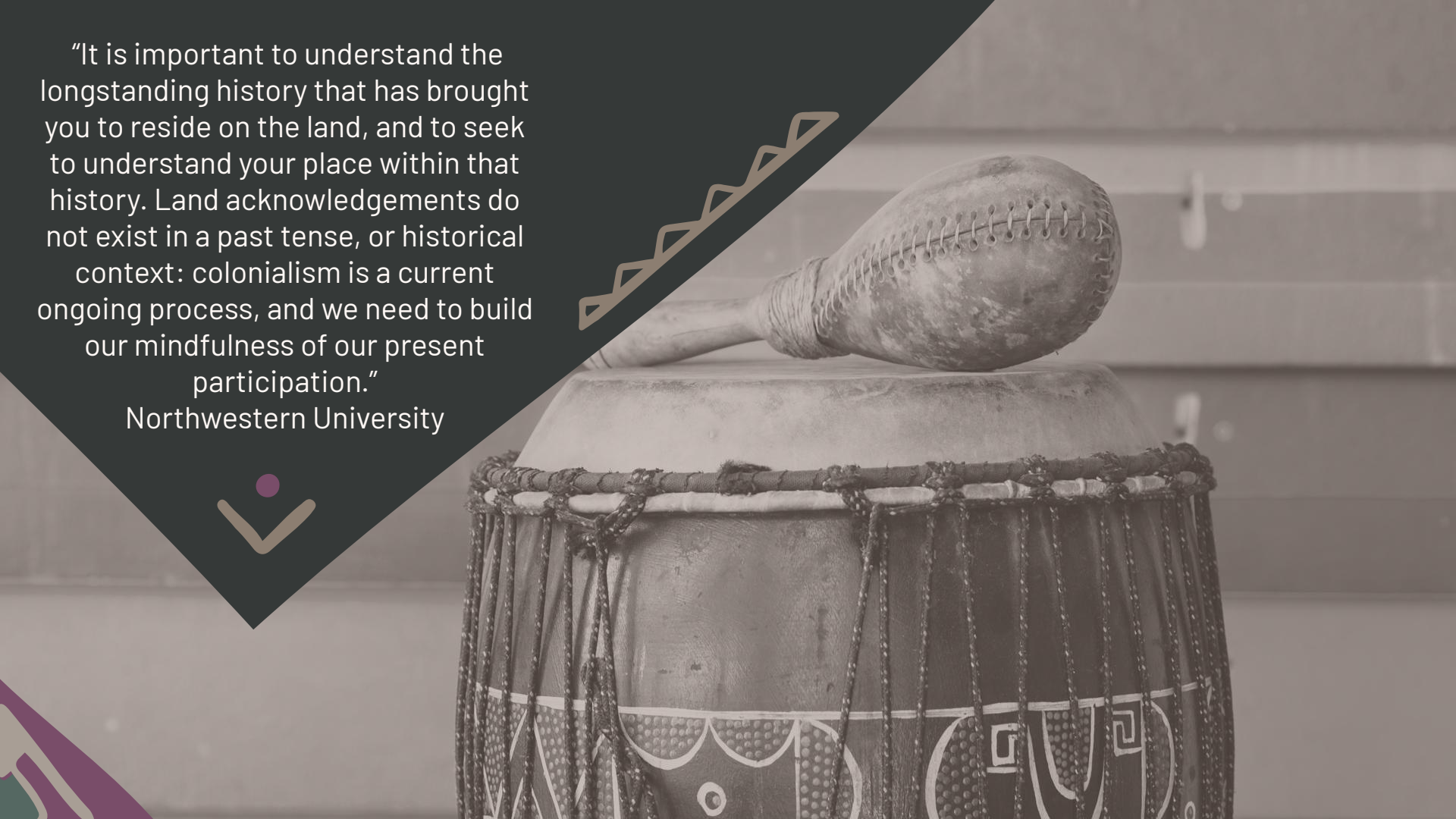


# What is a Land Acknowledgement?

A land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. Today, land acknowledgments are used to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live. Land acknowledgements are often spoken at the beginning of public and private gatherings.

Making a land acknowledgment should be motivated by genuine respect and support for Native Peoples. Speaking and hearing words of recognition is an important step in creating collaborative, accountable, continuous, and respectful relationships with Indigenous nations and communities.

“It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.”
Northwestern University



# FCUSD Land Acknowledgment

As the Folsom Cordova Unified School District, we acknowledge that our administrative facilities and schools occupy the unceded territory of the Nisenan and Miwok, the original people of the skies, land, and waters where we work and learn. We also recognize the presence and ancestral stewardship of the Nisenan Ancestral Tribes the Esto, Notomuse, and Nissim Pawenan to the north, and the Miwok Ancestral Tribes - the Amachumne, Cosumne, Hulpumne, and Mokelumne to the south, along the great Sacramento River systems since time immemorial.

We understand that this land, upon which our institutions are built, was once flourishing with natural resources, and sustained by the ancestral knowledge and practices of these Indigenous communities. We acknowledge the injustices of colonialism and attempted genocide that have impacted these communities and recognize the resilience of their descendants who continue to thrive today.

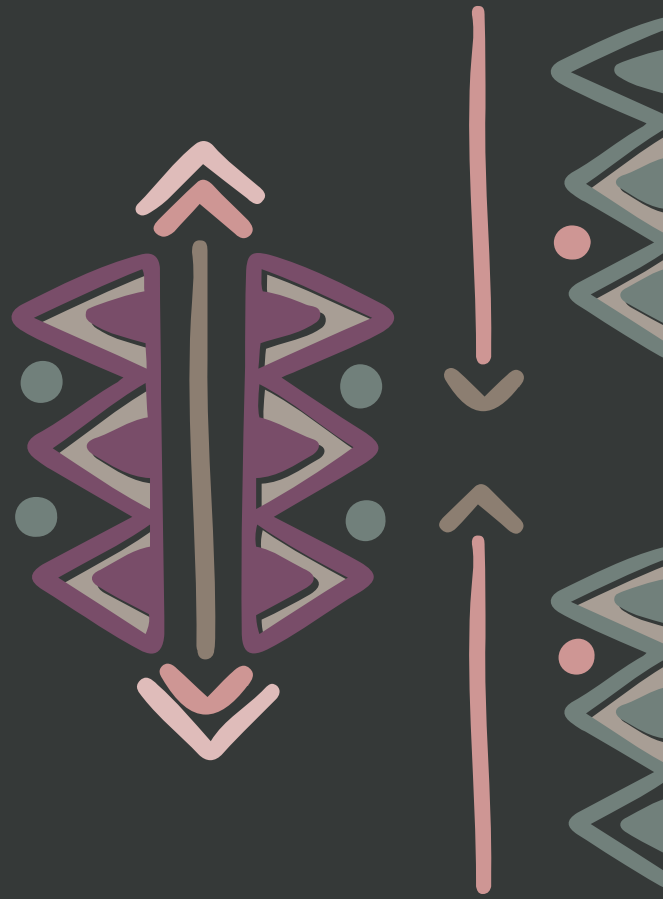
In our daily endeavors of teaching, learning, leadership, and community engagement, we commit to supporting, respecting and honoring their culture, traditions and lifeways. We pledge to work together for the evolving vision of the Miwok and Nisenan, especially all future generations.

— **Board adopted May 16, 2024**

# 01.

# HISTORY

What is Native American Heritage Month and why do we celebrate it?



# Native American Heritage Month TimeLine

## 1900

Since 1990 individual states recognized the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day, replacing Columbus Day. On October 8th 2021, President Joe Biden proclaimed October 11th Indigenous Peoples Day

## 1914

Red Fox James (Blackfoot) began a journey to advocate for a day to honor American Indians, presenting endorsements from 24 state governments

## 1990

President George. H. W. Bush approve the joint resolution designating the month Of November "National American Indian Heritage Month."

## 2021

Since 1990 individual states recognized the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day, replacing Columbus Day. On October 8th 2021, President Joe Biden proclaimed October 11th Indigenous Peoples Day

# Sacramento County Tribes

- Folsom and Rancho Cordova are located on the ancestral homelands of Nisenan people
- Nisenan people lived here 1,500 years before European explorers made contact with them in the early 1800's
- The name, Nisenan, derives from the plural pronoun nisena·n, "from among us".
- Nisenan language has 13 dialects
- Nisenan hunted and consumed all available types of animals, but not coyotes because they believed that coyotes embodied the souls of Nisenan ancestors
- Valley Nisenan lived along the valley drainages and were river-oriented in their lifeways

# "Rethinking the California Mission Project: Why It Matters."

For generations, California fourth graders have been asked to build models of Spanish missions using sugar cubes, cardboard, clay, and other materials.

Although these projects may seem like a fun way to learn history, they often focus on the beauty and architecture of the missions while overlooking the experiences of California Native Americans.




**The concern isn't simply building a model. It's what the assignment teaches children to celebrate, remember, and leave out.**

## The History Behind the Missions

- Spanish colonization brought major changes to California Native communities.
- Many Native people were forced or pressured into mission life and labor.
- Mission residents experienced restrictions on their freedom, harsh punishment, disease, and separation from traditional cultural practices.
- Thousands of Native Californians died during the mission period.
- Despite these hardships, Native communities resisted, survived, and continue to preserve their cultures today

## Why Mission Models Can Be Harmful

- **They romanticize colonization.** Students may see missions as beautiful accomplishments without understanding the suffering connected to them.
- **They leave out Native perspectives.** The project often centers Spanish missionaries rather than the Indigenous people whose lives were changed.
- **They can be hurtful to Native students.** Children may be asked to celebrate or recreate places associated with their ancestors' oppression.
- **They oversimplify history.** Building a structure does not necessarily demonstrate an understanding of the people, power, or events involved.
- **They reinforce incomplete narratives.** Students may walk away believing missions were primarily places of education, religion, and community rather than also sites of coercion and exploitation.

**California missions were not simply churches or historic buildings. They were part of a colonial system that profoundly harmed Indigenous communities**

# California's Own Educational Guidance

**California Department of Education, 2016**

CALIFORNIA HISTORY–SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK • GRADE 4 • PAGE 76

"Building missions from sugar cubes or popsicle sticks does not help students understand the period and is offensive to many."

## What Can We Do Instead?

- Research the Native nations whose lands were affected by the missions.
- Compare Indigenous life before, during, and after Spanish colonization.
- Explore firsthand accounts and Native perspectives.
- Learn about Native resistance, survival, and cultural preservation.
- Highlight California's living Native communities, languages, traditions, and contributions today.

**Are we teaching students to understand history, or simply to recreate its buildings?**

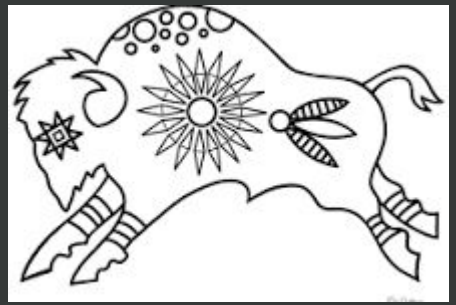
Thoughtful instruction can honor Native perspectives, acknowledge historical harm, and encourage students to think critically about California's past.



# 03.

# Primary Resources

# Primary Resources







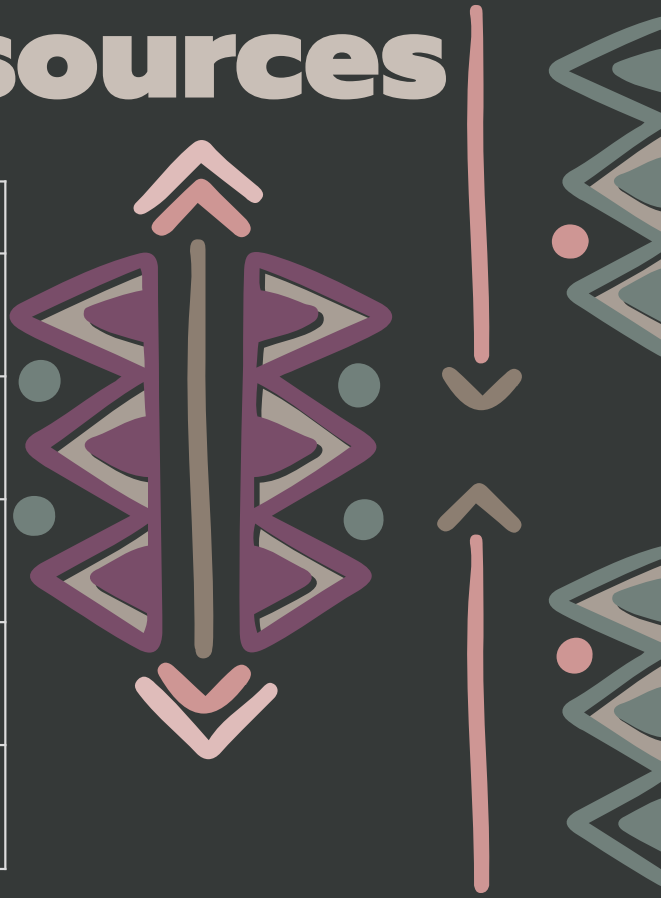

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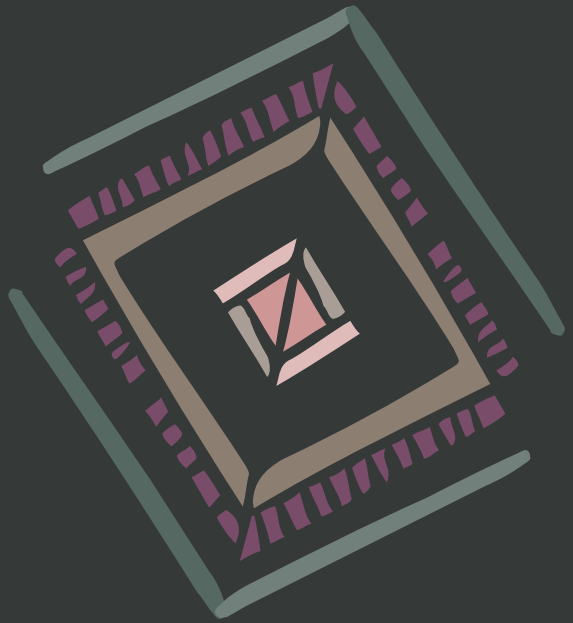
# 04. Secondary Resources

| Resource | What you'll find and how to use it |
|---|---|
| Smithsonian Native Knowledge 360° | Searchable lessons, videos, interactives, and teacher resources developed with Native communities, scholars, and educators. A strong starting point for an inquiry lesson that includes Native perspectives and source analysis. americanindian. |
| Living Nations, Living Words: A Guide for Educators | Joy Harjo's project brings together 47 contemporary Native poets through poetry, recordings, and an interactive map. The educator guide explicitly targets grades 7 and above and offers interdisciplinary activities. Excellent for exploring place, identity, visibility, and belonging. |
| California Indian Education for All | Resources and professional learning connected to place-based instruction, California Native American studies, culturally responsive literacy, and tribal community engagement. A useful California-specific planning hub rather than a single packaged lesson. |
| American Association of School Librarians resource collection | A curated gateway to booklists, American Indian Youth Literature Award selections, Indigenous literature resources, and reviews from American Indians in Children's Literature. Useful for choosing classroom texts and evaluating representation. |
| Contra Costa County Office of Education heritage-month materials | Includes a November Native American Heritage Month instructional-materials PDF. The collection is designed to support discussion connected to the Social Justice Standards. |



# 05.

# Notable Figures



# Ron W. Goode

North Fork Mono Tribe • Central California

A tribal chairman who works to restore traditional Native American land management practices, including cultural burning. He teaches how carefully controlled fires help protect forests, restore native plants, and prevent destructive wildfires.

Theme connection: Protecting ancestral lands through Indigenous knowledge and tribal stewardship





# John Trudell

Santee Dakota • Nebraska

John Trudell was an activist, poet, and leader in the American Indian Movement. He helped lead the 1969–1971 occupation of Alcatraz Island, demanding recognition of Native American rights and the return of Indigenous lands.

Theme connection: Fighting for tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and Native Americans' right to determine their own futures

# Chief Caleen Sisk

Winnemem Wintu Tribe • Northern California

Chief Caleen Sisk fights to protect sacred tribal lands, rivers, and salmon. She has worked to restore Chinook salmon to their ancestral waters and defend sacred sites threatened by development.

Theme connection: Defending ancestral land, protecting natural resources, and preserving cultural traditions for future generations.



# Crystal Ordoins

*FCUSD EMPLOYEE*



Hello my name is Crystal and I am a proud Indigenous woman living here in Folsom CA. My family belongs to the Tiwa and Hopi tribes based in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Cultural traditions are big in my family. We make fry bread tacos for dinner when we get together. It's fun to make and it's delicious! We also love to go to pow wows! A pow wow is a gathering where we sing, drum, dance, do storytelling, eat as well as trade crafts and goods. I stay active in Native American classes. I've been attending classes since I was a child and for the past 2 years I've been attending the FCUSD NAPAC (Native American Parent Advisory Committee) classes where we connect and learn more about our culture and make traditional tools and clothing. My daughters are involved in all these with me as well to keep these traditions strong

