



Superfund  
Redevelopment  
Initiative

# SITE REDEVELOPMENT PROFILE

Tuluwat Site

Eureka, California



Retaining wall installed on site to control erosion. (Source: EPA)

**Site Location:** half-mile north of Eureka on Indian Island in Humboldt Bay, California 95502

**Size:** 1.5 acres

**Existing Site Infrastructure:** No direct road access or functional dock facilities. Access is via boat at high tide or walking at low tide. No electricity or municipal water supply is located on site.

**Current Site Uses:** Ecological restoration and cultural preservation is underway. Ecological restoration will prevent erosion, while creating and enhancing wildlife habitat. Cultural preservation efforts have restored the Wiyot Tribe's connection to the area.

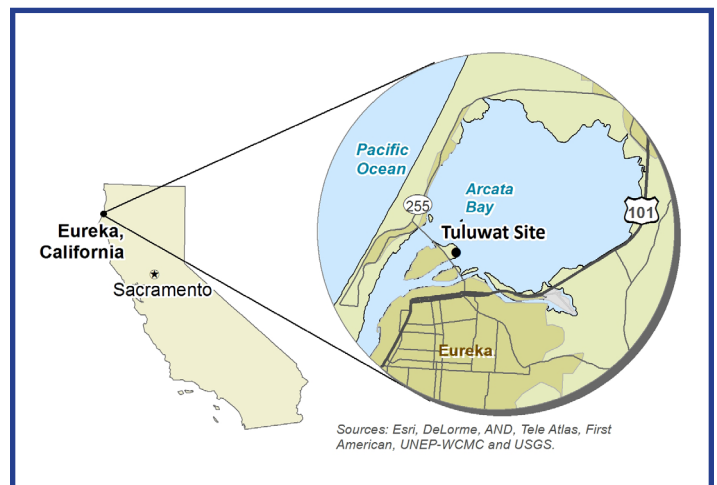
**Use Restrictions:** The site is a significant Native American cultural heritage area and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and as a threatened National Historic Landmark. Land use restrictions are in place to prevent development inconsistent with cultural preservation. The site is located within the city's Natural Resource and Water Conservation zoning districts.

**Surrounding Population:** 27,191 people live in Eureka (2010 Census).

Tuluwat Village is located on Indian Island in Humboldt Bay in northern California. It is a historically significant site that has been the cultural and spiritual home of the Wiyot people for hundreds of years. This is also where the Wiyot Tribe held its World Renewal ceremony, an annual traditional honoring of tribal ancestors. Extensive collaboration between the Wiyot Tribe and local, state and federal agencies, including EPA, has made major cultural and environmental restoration efforts possible here.

Beginning in the 1850s, settlers drove the Wiyot from Indian Island. This campaign culminated in a massacre in 1860. The few survivors were forcibly moved to a reservation. Then, between the 1870s and 1990, a dry dock and ship repair facility operated on the site. Shipyard operations and contamination from paints, solvents, metals and petroleum products impacted the 1.5-acre area. This prevented the Wiyot Tribe from returning to its ancestral lands.

In 2000, the Wiyot Tribe purchased the contaminated



Location of the site in Eureka, California.

site property. In 2004, the city of Eureka deeded the surrounding 40 acres to the tribe. For more than a decade, the Wiyot Tribe worked to leverage more than \$2.8 million in state and federal resources to clean up the site. EPA

## SITE HISTORY AND REDEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

- 1850s** Settlers begin removing the Wiyot people from Tuluwat.
- 1860** Settlers massacre Wiyot people on Tuluwat.
- 1870s - 1990** A dry dock and ship repair facility operates on the site, contaminating the Wiyot Tribe's ancestral lands.
- 1964** Tuluwat designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- 2000** The Wiyot Tribe buys the contaminated site property.
- 2004** The city of Eureka deeds the surrounding 40 acres to the tribe.
- 2004** EPA provides a brownfield cleanup grant for the site.
- 2013** After more than a decade working to get the site cleaned, the Wiyot Tribe holds its World Renewal ceremony at the site for the first time in more than 150 years.
- January 2017** EPA issues recommendations for considering tribal topics during Superfund work.

*"This is the center of our world. This is where we hold the dances that make us whole, that make us be better people and put the world right, and to begin anew each year."*

– Cheryl Seidner, former Tribal Chairwoman of the Table Bluff Wiyot Reservation

assistance included a \$200,000 brownfield cleanup grant in 2004, a review of site cleanup plans and a \$508,000 time-critical removal action. Cleanup efforts included the removal of leaking boat batteries, extensive soil excavation and installation of a multi-layered vegetated cap. Archaeologists monitored the cleanup process to ensure preservation of excavated artifacts.

In 2013, the Wiyot Tribe held the World Renewal ceremony on the site for the first time in more than 150 years, formally re-establishing the tribe's cultural connections to Tuluwat. Looking to the future, the tribe's plans for the site include dance and tribal gathering areas, cultural display buildings, a restored dock and canoe landing area, a fire ring, an interpretive trail and camp kitchen facilities.

EPA continues to take action to address tribal concerns. In January 2017, EPA issued a memorandum (available at <https://semspub.epa.gov/src/document/HQ/500024668.pdf>) providing recommendations for considering tribal treaty rights, treaty-protected resources and traditional ecological knowledge during Superfund activities.



The shellmound on site, a repository for hundreds of years of Wiyot Tribe history. (Source: EPA)



EPA transferring clean fill to the site (Source: EPA)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Melissa Friedland | (703) 603-8864  
[friedland.melissa@epa.gov](mailto:friedland.melissa@epa.gov)

Frank Avvisato | (703) 603-8949  
[avvisato.frank@epa.gov](mailto:avvisato.frank@epa.gov)

Gary Riley | (415) 972-3003  
[riley.gary@epa.gov](mailto:riley.gary@epa.gov)