

VOCAB

SPOTLIGHT

LIST OF TERMS

NATIVE: Referring to a person or thing whose ancestral roots are in a specific place. This term does not refer to specific tribal groups to which a person might belong. When possible, many Native people prefer to be called by their specific tribal name.

INDIGENOUS: Referring to something that originates from a specific place. For something to be Indigenous, it usually means that it has not migrated from its original homeland. Many Indigenous people throughout the world have been forced to migrate from their Indigenous homelands, however due to political, economic, and climate related conflict. These people remain Indigenous to their original homeland.

TREATY: A formal, legally binding agreement that has been ratified, or approved by the US Senate. Between 1778-1871, the United States signed 368 treaties with Native tribes across the continent, and many more that were never ratified. Native community leaders were often forced or coerced into signing these treaties, and the U.S. government broke many of them.

SOVEREIGNTY: The right to self-government. Native tribes have exercised sovereignty over their territories and communities since time immemorial. Tribal sovereignty was recognized by the U.S. government through the treaty signing process, however many tribes did not sign treaties with the U.S.

FEDERAL RECOGNITION: Tribes that entered into treaties with the U.S. government usually have Federal recognition, and therefore are recognized as independent, sovereign nations. The President of the U.S. may also grant Federal recognition through executive order. Tribes with Federal recognition can set laws and regulations that apply to their land, however, tribes are still subject to certain oversights by the U.S. federal government. Many Native tribes do not have federal recognition, but may have state recognition, or no recognition at all.

RANCHERIA/RESERVATION: An area of land owned by Native tribes, that is a part of the tribe's political and legal jurisdiction. In California, rancherias are usually very small parcels of land.

TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE:

A body of cultural, spiritual, and scientific knowledge that explores the relationships between living beings and the environment, operating from the understanding that all things are connected. Traditional Ecological Knowledge is passed down generationally through communities and families, and is inseparable from the cultural worldview of specific tribal communities.

TRIBAL COUNCIL: Tribal councils are usually the primary legislative and governing body within a tribal nation. Tribes have different methods for selecting council members, and distribute power to their tribal citizens according to their own needs and values.