



KOYOORE TUKADU: PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE KIT



◆ WE ARE ALL PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH

The Numu land base was reduced, forcing them to adapt to a monetary society. Now their water is being diverted into a farming project in the middle of the desert that has resulted in a loss of natural plant and animal life. Between the Great Basin Deserts' arid climate and the populations' demand for water things could not continue the way that they were. It is my hope that this kit teaches about the art of preservation and utilizing all that surrounds us out of need as opposed to desire; about learning from the people who lived in this land for thousands of years with less impact than we have made in the last 200 years.

"Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." Watersheds are the same in that anything that happens in a watershed has an effect on everything downstream. For example, fish start at Pyramid Lake and go up stream towards Lake Tahoe in the spring and the fall to spawn. The building of Derby Dam made the journey difficult for the fish of Pyramid Lake to spawn. The trout were able to jump up the fish ladders, but the Cui-ui can not jump. These fish need fresh water to spawn so all of the Cui-ui that headed upstream were trapped by the dam. Due to the volume of fish swimming upstream, blocked by the dam, the Cui-ui suffocated to death. In the 1960s this rare fish, only found in Pyramid Lake, became endangered. The Derby Dam has been altered to ensure survival of this species.

Another example of the interconnection of water is when the fish and game committee decided not to release water from the dam. The fish had to hold their eggs inside since they had no fresh water to spawn. This impacts the fish, the pelicans that eat the spawn, and on it continues through the many more delicate balances that are part of this cycle of life.

Uncontrolled grazing has led to soil erosion, the loss of native vegetation, and destabilized stream banks. The Kooyoe Tukadu used funding and assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture National Resources Conservation Service to address the unmanaged cattle grazing on the reservation. The tribe's efforts included the installation of sixty miles of fencing, solar powered wells and water tanks to serve as alternate water sources, so the livestock would become less dependent on the river. Laser leveling of agricultural fields was also used to reduce nutrient runoff. The leveling also reduces the amount of water used to irrigate fields, it allows for more equal distribution of water across the field, and reduces the amount of fertilizers and pesticides needed, providing a uniform-moisture environment for crops, and as a result, allows more uniform growth of the crops.

The tribe has re-vegetated, restored, and stabilized multiple sections along the riverbanks to reduce sedimentation and nutrient runoff. Restoration efforts also included wetland development, which helped reduce the amount of wastewater nutrients from entering the river. Upstream, the cities of Reno, Sparks, and Truckee installed plants to lower nutrient inputs that had been discharged from the treatment plants.

Issues concerning land and water rights have been the cause of many fights. In the past the two opposing forces took up arms. Today arguments are brought to the courts. Some choose to fight for a better life for the children, to preserve traditions, or to regain our land using schools, industry, and agriculture.