

PRESS RELEASE

Klamath Indigenous Land Trust

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KLAMATH INDIGENOUS LAND TRUST WELCOMES LAUREL HARKNESS AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KLAMATH BASIN, CA — The Klamath Indigenous Land Trust (KILT) today announced the hiring of Laurel Harkness as its new Executive Director, marking a significant step forward for the organization as it advances Indigenous-led stewardship and restoration across the Klamath Basin.

Harkness brings more than two decades of leadership experience at the intersection of conservation, rural economic development, and public policy. Most recently, she served as Coalition Director for the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, where she led multi-state partnerships supporting stewardship economies, Tribal engagement, and resilient landscapes.

Her background includes leadership roles in statewide and regional conservation organizations, as well as service in the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, where she worked directly with Tribal, federal, and local partners to advance economic recovery and land-based solutions across Northern California.

“We’re excited to welcome Laurel to the team, especially in this moment,” said Molli Myers, Board President of KILT. “She understands that restoring land is inseparable from restoring relationships—with Tribes, with communities, and with the river itself. Her ability to navigate complex partnerships while staying grounded in place and purpose makes her uniquely suited to help move KILT into our next chapter.”

Harkness will guide KILT’s growing portfolio of land stewardship and restoration efforts, including recently acquired lands in the Klamath River corridor and emerging partnerships with Tribal Nations to support cultural revitalization, habitat restoration, and long-term ecological resilience.

“I’m honored to join KILT at such a pivotal time,” said Harkness. “In the wake of dam removal, the Klamath Basin is undergoing a profound transformation. KILT is helping ensure that Indigenous leadership and knowledge are at the center of what comes next. I look forward to working alongside Tribal partners, local communities, and collaborators to steward these lands in a way that reflects both ecological integrity and cultural responsibility.”

KILT's work builds on decades of advocacy and collaboration across the Basin, with a focus on returning land to Indigenous stewardship, supporting climate resilience, and advancing community-led restoration efforts following dam removal on the Klamath River.

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About KILT

The Klamath Indigenous Land Trust is an Indigenous-led organization formed in 2025 by a group of [colleagues and friends](#) that worked together for over two decades on the Bring the Salmon Home campaign that led to the eventual removal of the lower four Klamath River dams.

KILT's Mission is to protect and preserve land for the benefit of Klamath Basin tribal communities and to advance public interest purposes such as fish and wildlife habitat restoration and enhancement, public education, and public recreational access. In this way we seek to empower Klamath Basin tribal communities by providing them with greater control over their land and resources through facilitating and supporting land returns, conservation easements, and other mechanisms.

For more information, visit www.klamathtrust.org.