



# CHALON INDIAN NATION NEWSLETTER

PO. Box 902  
Bakersfield. CA 93302

*We are descendants of the Chalon and Esselen, survivors of Mission Soledad whose traditional homelands encompass significant portions of Monterey and San Benito counties, including all of present-day Pinnacles National Park. Some of our people reside on or near our tribal homelands, while many others found refuge and subsistence in the distant regions of the city of Bakersfield, Kings county and elsewhere in CA.*

**June  
2024**

## Chalon Indian Nation Tribal Council

### 2024 Board of Directors

Audrey Alvarado	Chairwoman
Natalie Garcia	Vice Chair
Bridget Escalera	Secretary
Sonya Dorado	Treasurer
Esther Hernandez	Member-at-Large
Julian Behill	Sargent-at-Arms
Larry Lopez	Elders Rep

### Elders' Council

Gloria Medina	Chairwoman
Irene Soto	Vice Chairwoman
Yvonne Estrada	Purser
Richard Suniga	Sergeant at Arm
Larry Lopez	Elders Rep.

**Fall Equinox Ceremony at Pinnacles National Park on Saturday September 21, 2024. Special tour of Mission Soledad on Sunday September 22, 2024.**

## Our Mission

The mission of the Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield is to develop tribal resources, protect and preserve Native American heritage and cultural traditions, seek Federal recognition for our descendants, assist Native Americans in pursuing higher education, assist members seeking tribal affiliation, and promote healthcare services to Native Americans.

### *Upcoming Events*

The Council board meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 via zoom. Contact us at [chaloncouncil@gmail.com](mailto:chaloncouncil@gmail.com) to access our meetings.

- ◆ June 18 Chalon Council via Zoom
- ◆ July 9 Chalon Council via Zoom
- ◆ August 13 Chalon Council via Zoom
- ◆ Sept 10 Chalon Council via Zoom
- ◆ Sept 21-22 Equinox Ceremony at Pinnacles National Park

## CHAIRWOMAN'S CORNER

Blessings to all -

The General Meeting and Elections were recently held. I am honored and humbled to be elected for another two-year term to serve as the Chair of the Council board. The Council's recently revised 5-year plan is quite ambitious and there is a lot of work to be done to advance the interests and well-being of tribal members. A new priority for the Council is to secure private land close to our heartland—Pinnacles National Park—that will accommodate our ceremonial needs and strengthen our connection to our heartland. Another interest is to advance our knowledge and understanding of our traditions and rituals. The Council is hard at work to ensure that we serve the best interests of our tribe and respect our ancestors. Thank you all for your support and ongoing interest and involvement in our activities and events.

Audrey R. Alvarado, Ph.D.  
Chairwoman  
chaloncouncil@gmail.com



*“I is we. I've always had that perception – maybe because of where I was raised and how my parents and grandmother brought me up. I am an individual with my own interest, and I have my own proclivities and passions. But I wasn't created in a vacuum. I'm part of a larger community. I am part of a larger history.”*

– Lily Gladstone

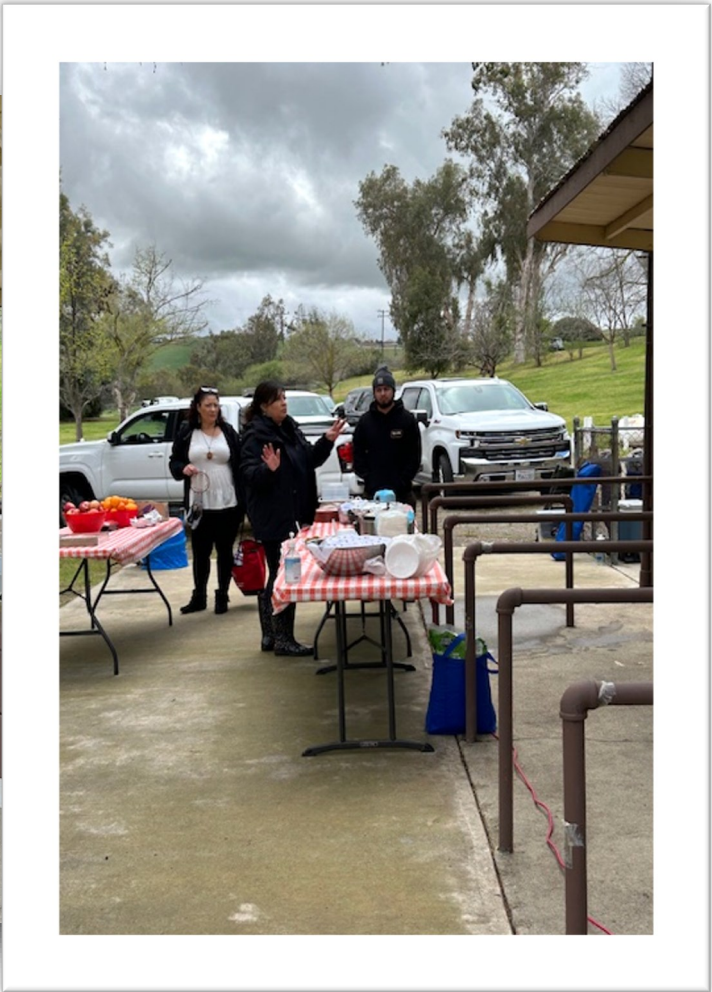
## *Spring Equinox March 23, 2024*

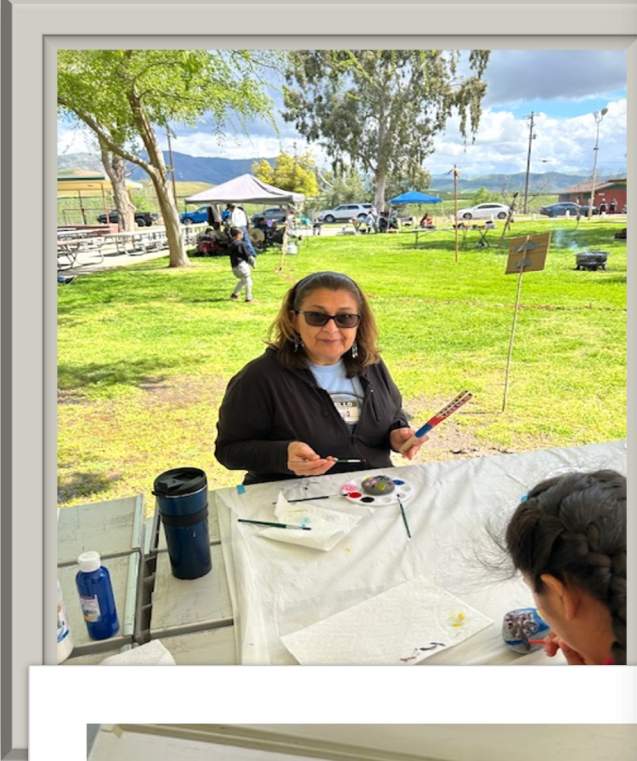
### *Highlights*

The Chalon Council would like to thank those who organized and participated in the Spring 2024 Equinox ceremony held in Bakersfield on March 23rd. The ceremony included the construction of a sweat lodge coordinated by **Jesse** and **Josephine Behill**. Participants were invited to join two sweats (women and community). Special guests from Watsonville, the **amah ka tura dance group**, shared dance and song in the circle. **Ernie** and **Victoria Morin** presented special hand-made gifts –walking staffs, feather ties, and wooden pipes to tribal members. Ernie also presented a new Family Staff and each family was invited to add their family ribbon to the staff in a moving ceremony; the **Apodaca family** danced in the circle; fire keepers **Cameron Garcia** and **Jonathan Rodriguez** kept the fire glowing and **Ariane Chow Garcia** and **Julian Behill** conducted the ceremony. It took a village to put this event on with a special call out to members of the Council **Audrey Alvarado, Julian Behill, Sonya Dorado, Bridget Escalera, Natalie Garcia, Esther Hernandez, and Larry Lopez**. Special thanks to you tribal members that offered your assistance and to those who attended.

# Spring Equinox 2024













## September 21, 2024 Equinox

The 2024 Fall Equinox ceremony will be held at Pinnacles National Park.

The equinox ceremony will be held on **SATURDAY September 21, 2024** at the Westside Entrance of the Park. A special tour of ***Mission Soledad*** will be held on **SUNDAY September 22, 2024** at 11:00 am.

**Location:** Pinnacles National Park, Westside Entrance

Soledad, CA

**Date:** Saturday, September 21, 2024 Equinox Ceremony

**Time:** 1:00am—4:00pm Equinox

**Date:** Sunday, September 22, 2024 Mission Soledad Visit

**Time:** 11:00 am

The Council has reserved rooms at **Motel 6 in Soledad**. It is located at 1155 Front Street. Call **831-678-3833** and reserve your room with your credit card ASAP under reservation code CHALON INDIAN NATION. King rooms are \$109 and double queen is \$119 per night. Note that the Council will provide **partial travel stipends** for **hotel and gas cost** in the amount of \$300.

Attendees are invited to bring side/dessert/snacks for the potluck meal after the equinox ceremony on Saturday. Please no drugs or alcohol allowed.

Contact the [chaloncouncil@gmail.com](mailto:chaloncouncil@gmail.com) for information.

### When visiting Mission Soledad—Charles Ettner (9/30/21)

As a note to the honoring of your ancestors, whenever anyone visits Mission Soledad you might take a moment when you arrive to stand in the parking lot and conduct your ancestor honoring before you move about the property. Unfortunately, the present parking lot was positioned and blacktopped over one of the two mission graveyards. The other, smaller graveyard used to be on the opposite side of the mission, but it was likely destroyed and is now a plowed agricultural area. Every mission has at least one gravesite. Now you know and you can address your ancestors and honor them as they deserve.

# Tribal Election 2024

The 2024 General Meeting and Elections was held in Bakersfield on Sunday April 21, 2024. Close to 50 participants enjoyed catching up and pizza. Chairwoman **Audrey Alvarado** reported on the Council's 2023 activities and accomplishments. She announced the upcoming Fall Equinox Ceremony that will be held on Saturday September 21st at Pinnacles National Park. The ceremony will be held from 1:00-4:00 pm. A special tour of Mission Soledad is being organized for those planning on staying overnight. The Council will provide partial gas and hotel stipends for those attending. She also announced that the Council has updated its 5-year Strategic Plan with a new addition of securing our own private land near our Heartland—Pinnacles.

**Yvonne (Frenchie) Turner** conducted the Elder's Council formal meeting and noted that they will be meeting soon to elect a new President and Secretary. The Elders' voted to present \$1500 to the Council for the scholarship fund. Frenchie concluded with a raffle filled with fun gifts.

Elections results were announced and **Audrey Alvarado** Chairwoman, **Bridget Escalera** Secretary and **Sonya Dorado** Treasurer were reelected to their previous positions. The winning logo was also announced (see following page).



## New Chalon Indian Nation Logo

During our General and Election meeting the Chalon Indian Nation voted on a new logo. The winning logo is below. According to the committee members who developed the logo the hummingbird symbolizes guidance and support and is from our Origin Story. The bear claw is for protection that the bear provided and we are part of the Bear Clan. The bear claw and the 4-point direction is a familiar, comfortable connection to our previous logos, which we felt were good for us as a committee not to make drastic changes so that there was still a connection to the logo that our Elder's used that are no longer here. The acorn represents nourishment. Baskets were used in ceremonies and were a part of everyday life for our ancestors. In addition, the basket holds a significant place in our culture as baskets represent our cultural identity, artistic expression, and the preservation of our historical methods. They are also a testament to our Chalon tribe and their stories. Baskets were used for various daily tasks, such as carrying food, water, and clothing, and were also exchanged as valuable gifts between family and friends.



## Meet Your Newly Elected Council Board Members



**Chair of the Council Audrey R. Alvarado.** Audrey is an enrolled citizen of the Chalon Indian Nation of California and is the daughter of Ramona and Robert Alvarado, granddaughter of Claudina Duchie Valenzuela Urrea, who was the daughter of Ramona Feliz Valenzuela, who was the daughter of Jose Feliz, who was the son of Maria Olivera, who was the daughter of Josefa Piu-Uina,. I am proud and humbled to have been elected as Chair of the Chalon Indian Nation Council two years ago. I have served on the board since 2019 in the capacity of member-at-large and had been involved previously as an advisor to the board. I worked in the nonprofit sector for over thirty-five years directing city, state and national based nonprofit organizations and at the University of Colorado Denver. I have served on numerous boards at the state and national level and was named a top 50 nonprofit leader for 6 years while serving as the Executive Director of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations (now called National Council of Nonprofits). I received degrees and training from Bakersfield Community College (AA), University of the Pacific (BA), University of Utah (MA and PhD), and University of Denver (post PhD). I lived outside of California for much of my professional life – Utah, Colorado, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington, DC. My wife Katie Loughary and I are pleased to be back West living in Eugene, Oregon and part-time in Bakersfield.

**Secretary of the Chalon Council Bridget Escalera:** Good day all my relations. My name is Bridget Escalera. A Chalon elder and citizen in good standing. It's been my honor to serve as your secretary, on and off for the last 15 + years. I am available, willing and able. I understand the importance of maintaining accurate records of board meetings. Publish and make available documents for federal, state and local government entities. Also for our citizens upon request. Record gatherings and celebration events, all needed toward our joint goal for Federal Recognition. My vision is to continue working with the council for the benefit of our Chalon people. Advance our presence within the Native community in Kern County and our Heartland at the Pinnacles National Park. My promise is to represent Chalon Indian Nation well. Thank you for your consideration.

**Treasurer of the Chalon Council Sonya Dorado:** Hello my name is Sonya Marie (Alvarado) Dorado. I am the daughter of Ramona (Urrea) and Robert Alvarado. Ramona is the daughter of Claudina (Valenzuela) Urrea. Claudina is the daughter of Ramona Feliz. I am currently retired after 23 years of employment with Kern County Superintendent of Schools as a case manager for Community Connection for Child Care. I was born and raised in Bakersfield, California. I am a graduate from Foothill High School class of '79 and from Bakersfield Community College class of '98. I previously served on the Chalon Board as secretary and currently serving as treasure. I participated in our First Equinox ceremony at the Pinnacles. I value family and Father God with respect to all, especially our elders, living and deceased. I strive to make my people proud and to set an example for our children and grandchildren. I hope by serving on the board I may be closer to completing this goal.



**The Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield and Elder's Council have set up a scholarship fund with a goal of helping members of the Chalon Tribe and San Joaquin Valley's indigenous youth achieve their academic goals through higher education or post high school training.**

**Deadline for 2024 applications is June 15, 2024. Go to our website for information on how to apply and submit your application.**

**<https://chalontribe.com/>**

## Youth Quest 2024

### California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN)

Submitted by Lawrence Salcido Jr.

On March 18th, Chalon youth **Santana Rose Medina** and her uncle Lawrence Salcido Jr. traveled to Sacramento to attend Youth Quest 2024 hosted by the California Youth Advocacy Network (CYAN) to share her experiences of commercial tobacco with local legislators. They met with youth from other tribes such as the Cherokee Nation, Wukchumni Tribe, and the Tachi Yokut Tribe. During the youth-led conference, Santana along with other Native Youth were invited to introduce themselves, their tribes, and say hello in their language. Santana proudly stated she is Chalon and spoke, "Misis duuxi" (good day) to a conference of hundreds.

That day, Santana along with an entire conference of youth marched towards the capitol to speak with Assemblyman James Ramos, one of the few Native representatives who sits on the California Native American Legislative Caucus. She shared her experience with commercial tobacco, how kids at her middle school often engage in vapes in the restroom, and how many commercial tobacco products inappropriately use Native American imagery. She shared the same story with a senior staff member for Senator Hurtado's office.



## Good News in Funding

### Connecting to Our Homelands Grant Received

The Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield recently received a grant in the amount of \$4,000. The funds were made possible by the National Park Service and Hopa Mountain. The funds will support our effort to take tribal members, particularly our youth and elders, to our Heartland, Pinnacles National Park. The purpose of the grant is to share our indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage and traditions through our September 21, 2024 equinox ceremony.

### Sustainable Art Foundation Grant

Through a connection and recommendation from Chalon citizen **Christine Howard Sandoval**, Chalon Indian Council of Bakersfield received a generous grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Sustainable Art Foundation, a private family foundation. The funds are restricted to support five scholarships and the development of series of two—three educational workshops for our youth to learn our history and cultural practices.

### Recent Donations from Generous Donors

The Elder's Council recently approved \$1500 from their funds to support the Chalon and Elder's Scholarship Fund. In addition, the Council received \$1000 from Gayle Castro to support our scholarship fund in memory of Louise Apodaca. The Council also received a donation from the Save Mount Diablo in the amount of \$1,000 to support our work on behalf of our tribe. Thanks to all for supporting our work.

**The Council approved the following land acknowledgement statement to be read at all events held in the Bakersfield and surrounding area.**

## **Land Acknowledgement Statement Kern County and Surrounding Area**

We acknowledge that the Kern County is the ancestral homeland of many Native groups which include the Tejon people comprised of Kitanemuk, Yokut, and Chumash; Tubatulabal comprised of Tulami, Tubatulabal, and Palagewan, Western Mono, and Kawaiisu peoples.

We acknowledge that Kern remains home to the beforementioned groups and to Native folks, like our own people the Chalon, who have moved here from others part of the state and country as well as indigenous folks from other parts of the world.

We pay respect to elders both past and present and stand together with the traditional custodians of the land on which we are here today.



## **Chalon Ceremonies & Ceremonial Events**

### **Traditional and Contemporary Practices**

**Charles Ettner, Ph.D.**

Tribal Advisor/Anthropologist

Chalon Indian Nation

Indigenous ceremonial practices of the past and present tend to differ as Native people attempt to recover the past, sometimes borrowing from other Native groups, and through group innovations. The result today may differ from the past, but practices tend to change over time. The following discussion is not intended to criticize anything in the present, but rather to add information and a better understanding about the unique character of traditional practices that distinguish the Chalon people from other tribal groups.

Chalon ancestors held ceremonies at various times, often to mark special events of one kind or another. In addition to the sacred annual winter solstice ceremony, celebrations were often held to welcome important visitors from other tribes who came to negotiate alliances. Sometimes ceremonies were held for trade parties from far away tribes, sometimes to celebrate exceptional successes of hunting or gathering parties, and for other extraordinary events or achievements.

The Chalon tribal leader/headperson was the one person who had the duty and responsibility for announcing the date and place of an event, assigning duties to village members, and coordinating ceremonial arrangements. Agreement to hold a ceremony was secured from the tribal council. Tribal leaders personally directed ceremonial food dispersals and gift giving, if any, which had been collected for the leader's personal holdings and maintained for such purposes. Clearly the distribution of wealth and resources operated then differently from today with the tribal head person managing and dispersing tribal resources to guests of honor and ensuring that the needs of all villagers were adequately addressed.

Regarding structure and formality, the Chalon ceremonial circle was a simple affair without an entrance or other structure, but possibly with a pole or staff posted at the center of the circle. There are no reports or indications of any formalities required for dancers to enter or exit the dance circle: no turning in a circle and no facing in a particular direction to enter or to leave the dance circle. Men were the only reported dance participants at ceremonies and dancing was performed in a clockwise direction. Both men and women participated in singing outside of the dance circle. It was, past and present, strictly taboo for any woman to attend or participate in a tribal ceremony during her menstrual period. (continued)

Smudging to cleanse one's spirit was normally performed by the individual prior to an event, usually after dressing and most often with mugwort (aka River sage) or possibly with cedar. White sage was only used by the Chumash and their neighbors. Its usage did not spread to other tribes until the latter part of the 1900s. Wild tobacco was and is used as an offering to the spirits and to the ancestors without any formality other than that of one's own choosing.

Ceremonial regalia, though minimal, is not specified in extant documents either for dancers (men) or for men and women outside the dance circle. Some dancers wore their hair in a top knot bunched in the center, and all tended to adorn their bodies from head to toe (almost) with paint in stripes or other patterns in red (red ocher), white (kaolin), and black (charcoal) applied by their fingers. Unlike in the north, southern Costanoan speaking groups like the Chalon did not use owl feathers or spliced condor feathers trimmed with woodpecker scalps, but the Chalon did use Yellowhammer-quill head bands.

As part of daily ornamentation, some men wore a nose-stick inserted through the nasal septum. Similarly, haliotis pendants were commonly worn by both women and men for protection. Other ornamental necklaces were also common to both sexes, especially during ceremonies. Tattooing was also common to both sexes though not for ceremonial purposes. Face tattooing was more common among Chalon females. Male tattooing is less well identified, but tattooing of the forehead and arms did occur. Information is not specific regarding ear lobe boring, which did occur among females and possibly among males as well.

Musical instrumentation consisted of a split-stick 'clapper', the primary instrument, rattles attached to a stick-handle, a musical bow played with one's finger, and end blown wooden flutes (not made of Elder or bone). None of the Costanoan speaking groups had or used drums or hand drums in ceremonies or song. Hide-skin drums did not appear in California until the very late 1800s or more likely 1900s. The nearby Yokuts peoples traditionally used hollowed out logs, which they beat upon with large sticks. (continued)

Traditionally, sweats were held in connection with hunting activities or the like and for other cleansing and healing purposes. Sweats for dancers was not a commonplace activity, but it may have occurred on occasion. Chalon sweats much like sweats for all Costanoan speakers were never co-ed and normally group sweats were attended by male participants. Female sweating was usually an individual activity often connected to healing or cleansing. Contemporary female group sweats are an expansion of the former traditional practice. Across the Americas, women on their “moon” (during their menstrual period) are not permitted to attend any women’s sweat. The above information is provided as an aid to understanding the unique ancestral ceremonial practices that distinguish the Chalon Indigenous people. Some, but not all, of the above details and information is available within Harrington’s discussion of “Culture Elements.”

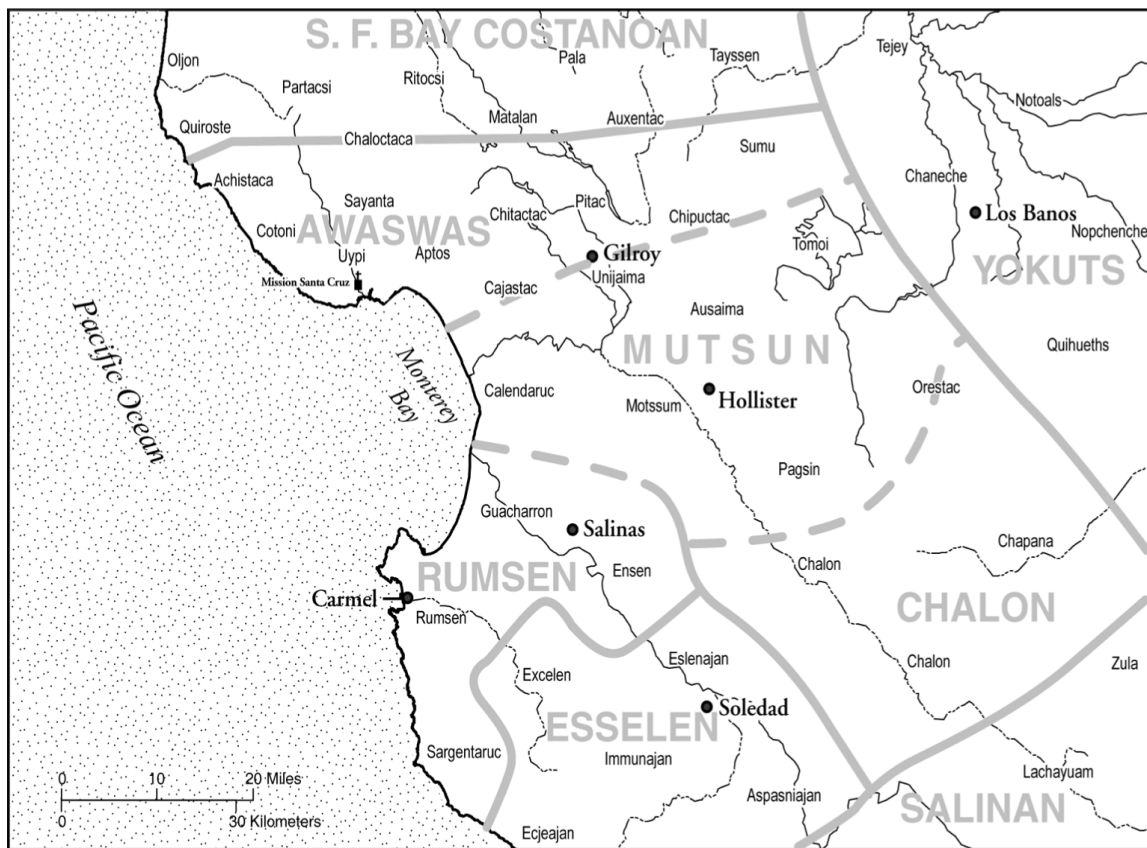


Figure 13. Map of Native Local Tribes and Language Areas of the Monterey Bay Area at the Time of Spanish Entry.