Our Future

Narrator: The Campo Kumeyaay people are proud of their accomplishments. They are working hard to maintain a healthy environment, a solid economy, and a strong culture.

Monique LaChappa, Tribal Chairwoman, Campo Kumeyaay Nation: As you can see back over here behind me, we have lovely trees that were planted to restore our water and bring up the water tables here. And we are really proud that we are doing something for the environment. You can see that the tribal people are still caretakers of the earth, and it comes from our heart.

Stan Rodriguez, Kumeyaay Language Instructor, Santa Ysabel Band of the Iipay Nation: I mean, there is a limit, and if we do not take care of our resources, if we do not take care of these things, if we are not—if we do not live in harmony, then we’re going to destroy it. And if we destroy it, we’re going to destroy ourselves.

Paul Cuero, Jr., Singer and Tribal Councilman, Campo Kumeyaay Nation: Even within our creation story, we’re made from dirt and water, which is mud. And so we are part of this environment. And so by using these kind of techniques shows our own people that the environment is such an important thing because we are part of it. And to listen to some of those old stories that are being told and bringing them to a reality is really helping our younger people to understand, because they can see it.

Michael Connolly, Environmental Consultant and Former Tribal Councilman, Campo Kumeyaay Nation: There are many people and many organizations that want to work with us to try to preserve the ecosystems in many of these valleys. And I think that’s something that is a benefit, not only to our people, but to all people.
Paul Cuero Jr.: The Creator gave us ways of taking care of ourselves with our environment. That’s the importance of why teaching these songs, why teaching those different things—is to tell them the very environment we’re in, if we take care of it, it’ll take care of us. If it perishes, we will perish. That’s just the bottom line.

My uncle used to say, “The land is the law,” and I never understood what he meant by that. And he’d say, “Well, because if you don’t have water, you can’t live. If you don’t have the vegetation that we use, if we don’t have our oak trees, the acorn, we can’t survive. So if we don’t take care of those very things, we’re not taking care of ourselves.”

Ana Gloria Rodriguez, Basketmaker, Baja Kumiai Tribe: We just want—be in peace with everyone, and when I say everyone, it’s with the plants, with the animals, with people. Respect each other, you know, because they have life. Plants have life. Water has life.

Stan Rodriguez: But in all these things, all things that we talk about, the water is a very sacred thing, and when we say (Kumeyaay language), we take care of that water. We watch over it. We hold it with respect.

It’s something that not only keeps us alive physically, also spiritually. It’s a very sacred thing.