



California Department of Water Resources  
Tribal Communication Committee is looking for



California Tribal Water Stories for future publication.

**Tubatulabal Water Story - "When the Earth Quaked"**

Story from Francis Philips Autobiography - record by Erminie Voeglin (Anthropologist) in 1933 - Tubatulabal Ethnography (published in 1938, UC Berkeley Press).



Francis Philips (age 68 - Father: Tubatulabal and Mother: Koso) provides the story and her daughter, Legora Tungate (age 40: Mother ½ Tubatulabal and ½ Koso, Father: Tubatulabal) translates this story from Pakanapul into English. Story told in 1933.

"There was one time when we were living over at *cuhka-yl* (no. 17, fig. 11) in a mud and brush house. That's the way the Indians used to do, they just moved all around; they'd camp under some willows, anywhere; they'd keep moving around all the time. A big earthquake came and frightened everybody. I was a little girl then, about 7 yrs. Old (1872); afterward my father used to tell me about that earthquake. I remember only a little bit; the springs got white, like milk, when that earthquake came.

Everybody cried and went around shouting; there were lots of people living at *cuhka-yl* *Pedra Netto* was living there then. We had to get water to drink from the river at *Kernville*; the water in the springs was hot and white, just like milk, for about 3 days. Nobody would drink it. I just remember a little bit about it; I know all the children were frightened and cried when the earth quaked".

*Francis Philips (1933) - Kern Valley, California  
Tubatulabal and Koso*

If you or your Tribe is interested in submitting a story, photo, recording, or film about Tribal Water Story – feel free to contact:

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## **Current Tribal Perspective of our Tubatulabal Water Story - "When the Earth Quaked"**

Today, there is a dam that has created Lake Isabella. This dam was built on a fault line. If the engineers of the 1940's had read our Tribal story about Kernville and earthquakes, they may have picked a different location.

Because of the Lake Isabella dam location, there has been on-going seepage and big concerns for the structure of this dam. This had caused the release of a lot of water from the Lake Isabella. Several of our old Tribal village sites and burial sites are located under Lake Isabella. However, as the water level drops, there is greater risk that our old village sites may surface and requires immediate protection.

Today - quality drinking water is a major concern for our Tribal people. Just as we know not to drink the water when it is "milky" or "muddy" – we have also learn from recent water project by U.S. Indian Health Services to not drink water with arsenic or bad bacteria. We are working on getting improved access to quality drinking water from natural springs and underground water wells.

Our head waters are Mt. Whitney and through Yosemite and the Sequoia National parks. Forest lands and meadows wetlands need to be properly managed to help protect the water, water flows, and water cycle. We believe that if there are five good snows, we will have a good pinon (pine nut) harvest and lots of acorns. We watch from Kern Valley for the storms and the clouds that can come after a fire. Flash flooding can be very dangerous in the mountains and dessert areas – we make sure to watch for these signs "sounds of thunder, grey clouds, and smell of rain with winds".

Sustainable water systems include the ability to plan, develop, and manage the usage of this valuable cultural resource: Water is "paal" – sacred and important to all. In the past, we had spiritual rain-makers – today, we continue to whistle for wind that may bring our rains.