

My name is Brenda Bowie. I am a member of the Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria. Rohnerville Rancheria is a Wiyot/Bear River/Mattole Tribe. We are one of three Wiyot Tribes here in Humboldt County. My Native blood is Wiyot and Redwood Creek (Chilula). I serve on the Bear River Tribal Council. At a General Council Meeting Jesse Sherman, a Bear River Tribal Member, requested a donation to the Wiyot Sacred Sites Fund. He indicated this money would be used to help fund the upcoming World Renewal Ceremony at the end of March 2014. The Tribal Council voted to donate \$2,500. After giving it some thought I requested resources to purchase regalia-making materials and for the support of our Tribal Members to create regalia that will be used in the upcoming ceremony. For myself, although not raised in any traditions, decided that as a leader and elder of my tribe that I should be the first one to volunteer from our Tribe to help make the World Renewal Ceremony take place. The Tribe donated \$10,000 for the purchase of regalia materials. I was pleasantly surprised at the Tribe's wisdom to jump-start our cultural spirits here at Bear River. Table Bluff created an aggressive regalia making schedule and Bear River and Blue Lake were invited to participate. Leona Wilkinson and Michelle Hernandez are the teachers in these classes. Jadene Reynolds and I have been religiously going to the classes to learn how to dress-make and to craft the necklaces needed for the girl dancers. We were told to always come to the classes in a good way. Never be angry or upset with someone or something. To be in a positive state of mind while making the dress as the dress is a living item. Other Tribal Members join us when they can especially the youth in our Tribe. We aren't sure if we are going to get it all done in time but we are going to do the best we can. We have made plans to borrow regalia from other Tribes if we aren't able to get the dresses done in time. The other Tribes in the area are being very generous and helpful with their advice on ceremony. As a matter of fact their advice was "to do the best you can". Bear River will have two girls dancing in the ceremony. Reynolds' step-daughter Alyssa Wallace and Alicia Spott are the dancers. Another Tribal Elder and Tribal Council Member Barry Brenard has also been very instrumental in Bear River's efforts to create needed regalia for the upcoming ceremony. Juan Carlos, Youth Coordinator for Bear River and Barry Brenard have organized our young men in crafting regalia as well. Ted Hernandez, Table Bluff Chairman, is a valued mentor as well to Bear River. Included in the regalia classes are feather tying. George Blake is instructing the men on traditional feather preparation. Bear River will have three men dancers with Jesse Sherman, Darrell Sherman and Lio Lopez.

The ceremony to me will serve as a way to learn what ceremony is about. I grew up not participating in any type of ceremonies. I think by helping plan, craft regalia and encourage other Tribal Members to take part in this ceremony it will help me grow culturally. I once was told "you don't act like an Indian". I am not sure what an Indian acts like but I do know that I am proud of my heritage and I am getting blessed by being here at the right time and the right place to be a part of this awesome ceremony. Bear River Tribe is honored to be a part of this renewed ceremony. There have been many Tribal members and Tribal staff that have volunteered to help with any needed food preparations, cutting wood, clearing and preparing camp sites for the dancers. My hope is that our full participation in this Renewal Ceremony will bond us more closely with our neighboring Tribes and teach us the meaning of sacred traditions, dances and Native American culture practiced by our ancestors. With this experience we hope to be able to carry on these traditions for future generations.