

Thomas P. O'Rourke, Sr.

Chairman of the Yurok Tribe

Chairman O'Rourke has been active in Yurok traditional ceremonies and gathering practices all of his life. He was part of the revitalization of the Pecwan Jump Dance, a dance that holds the roles fire owner and sweathouse leader. To this day, the Chairman continues to walk the ancient ceremonial paths, where he stops to sing traditional Yurok songs, many of which he has received from the spiritual realm, at special locations to bring balance back into this world.

He is currently in his third term to office of the Chairman and will serve until 2018. He previously served as Chairman 2009-2012 and 2012-2015. Vice-Chairman from 2003-2006. As Chairman, he is the Chief Executive Officer of the Tribe. Part of his duties include: presiding over all meetings of the Tribal Council and the Tribal Voting Membership, and acting as the principal spokesman and representative for the Yurok Tribe. Under his leadership, the Tribe has reclaimed tens of thousands of acres in Yurok ancestral territory, secured much needed water for the Klamath River and initiated a far-ranging jobs plan that will benefit Yuroks for generations to come. Before speaking to important issues the deeply reverent man prays for guidance from the Creator, as his ancestors have done since time-immemorial. He attributes the Tribe's continued success to the professionalism of his staff and the resiliency of Yurok people.

Delegate to: Forest Service, Native American Graves Protection Rights Act (NAGPRA), Redwood Nation Parks (RNP), Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO/SHPO), National Indian Gaming Association (NIGA/CNGIA), National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC), Klamath Fisheries Management Commission (KFMC), National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS), Pacific Fisheries Management Commission (PFMC), Ocean Resources, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian Child Welfare (ICWA), National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), Internal Indigenous Issues, Affiliated tribes of the Northwest Indians (ATNI), Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), Personnel Sub-Committee & Crash Committee, Public Safety Department, Repatriation & Collections Program, Tribal Court,

Board Member of: Yurok Economic Development Corporation (YEDC), Northern California Tribal Chairmen's Association (NCTCA).

A college graduate with additional schooling, Chairman O'Rourke participates in Tribal ceremonies, enjoys fishing and snowboarding. Thomas and Sherry, his wife of 16 years, are the proud parents of six children and eight grandchildren. They reside in Tulley Creek, CA. When the Chairman is not in the office he is spending time with his extended family fishing on the river, gathering basket materials and collecting ceremonial plants.