

# California Coastal Trail

One of the Great Trails of our Nation

# Chumash History

The First People



While informal trails along the coast have been used for thousands of years, in 1972 the passing of Proposition 20 formalized the goal of establishing a continuous trail along our coast. Already in progress, the trail will eventually extend 1,200 miles from Oregon to Mexico. In 1999 the California Coastal Trail (CCT) was designated as California's Millennium Legacy Trail.

The Obispeño Chumash, yak tit<sup>y</sup>u tit<sup>y</sup>u yak tiłhini (ytt), belong to the homeland of San Luis Obispo County, and have been here for over 10,000 years. They have villages along the coast from Santa Maria River up to Ragged Point, and inland to Carrizo Plains. In their language, Avila is called tsitpxatu, the place of the whales. Some other villages on the Pecho Coast are tsikyiw, tšanu and petpete?su. The coastal people hunt and gather deer, fish, shellfish, sea lions, sharks, nuts, berries, and more.



## Trails from the Past

Our Chumash community has lived in this area for over 10,000 years. The trails they established along the coastline are precursors to today's Pecho Coast Trail, a local segment of the CCT.



## Hike the Trail

Here at Port San Luis, the public can hike to the Point San Luis Light Station and beyond to Rattlesnake Canyon via the Pecho Coast Trail, a local segment of the CCT.



## Bay to Bay

Plans are underway for a new 18-mile segment of the California Coastal Trail, linking San Luis Obispo Bay to Morro Bay.

For more information – [www.portsanluis.com/trails](http://www.portsanluis.com/trails)



## Chumash Language

There are at least eight Chumash groups, each with distinct languages belonging to their individual homelands. Their languages are not closely related to any other language family. Due to geographic barriers, the Obispeño are more isolated from other Chumash tribes, which is evident in their language's evolution over time.



## Art of Weaving

The Chumash are known for their high quality, beautifully decorated baskets. In San Luis Obispo County the northern and southern climates collide, providing access to plant materials from both regions and are used in Obispeño weaving. Natural occurring asphaltum (tar) is used for lining woven bottles to hold water and for waterproofing tule canoes. Weaving is a necessary and essential tradition exhibiting functionality with meaningful expression.



## Dwellings

Chumash dwellings are traditionally circular and dome-shaped, made from willow poles and thatched with woven bulrush. There is a fireplace in the center with a smoke-hole in the roof. Shelves with storage baskets full of acorns, nuts, fruits, dried meat, herbs and other foods. Beds are made from willow poles and covered with tule mats and animal furs.

## Modern & Living History

The Obispeño language, *tʔinísmuʔ tilhinkʔtitʔu*, was nearly lost as European colonialism worked to erase indigenous communities and way of life. However, in the early 1900's one of the last Obispeño speakers, Rosario Cooper, worked with J.P. Harrington to document their language, songs and stories. Rosario's recordings have been vital for *yak titʔu titʔu yak tithini* to revitalize their language and bring it back to the land. The tribe has developed a written orthography and is constantly expanding their vocabulary, allowing them to speak and write about modern life in their language. Language is alive and changing with time, carrying family histories, traditions and culture kept and passed on through the collective memory of countless generations. When we speak the world hears us.

In Avila, *tsítpxatu*, the abundance of ocean life creates a natural location for producing beads, pendants, buttons and other ornamental decorations. Making use of available materials, such as abalone, olivella, pismo clam, steatite, chert, animal bone and seeds. Local rock outcroppings are used to make tools such as drills, needles and grinding stones used in bead production. Beadmakers that continue this tradition today may use modern tools and technology, but are still making the same things in the same places as their people have for countless generations. Although acquiring some of these traditional resources has become more difficult as populations suffer from over harvesting and changing climates. *yak titʔu titʔu yak tithini* Northern Chumash tribe is an advocate for ocean life, open spaces, and preserving our local history and culture. They actively partner with public and private entities to provide education and promote balance of growth and sustainable practices. *yak titʔu titʔu yak tithini* remain stewards of SLO County, understanding their relationship to the world and responsibility to it.

For more information visit [www.yttnorthernchumash.org](http://www.yttnorthernchumash.org)

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