

Restore/Restory brings Cache Creek's history to the forefront

By KATHERINE JARVIS Daily Democrat

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The floodgates to Cache Creek's diverse history will open Saturday, Oct. 20, when the Restore/Restory project debuts at the Nature Preserve.

The multimedia project will culminate in a festival from noon to 6 p.m. at the preserve, located off County Road 20 west of Woodland.

"Restore/Restory: A People's History of the Cache Creek Nature Preserve" is the result of about two years of research and interviews, a collaboration between jesikah maria ross of UC Davis Art of Regional Change and the Cache Creek Conservancy.

Cache Creek, and the preserve itself, are important to Yolo County's history, ross said.

The Nature Preserve was created in 2000 from an area once used for gravel mining and processing. Fourteen miles of the creek were restored, ross said.

"There are few places in Yolo County where the layers of history can be so easily revealed," ross said.

Cache Creek is "a microcosm of California," she continued. "We can also understand the cultural history of this state."

While ross has worked on other projects through the Art of Regional Change, which she founded, Restore/Restory is "a hyperlocal project that was less about issues and more about histories," she said.

ross added that once people understand and care about their region's history, the more likely they are to get involved with preserving it.

"We're restoring the landscape with people's histories," she said.

Lynnel Pollock, executive director of the conservancy, sees how the project will benefit the preserve.

"The history and art work generated through this project will really help the conservancy in its efforts to promote stewardship of our natural and cultural resources," she said in a statement.

More than 200 people were involved in the project, including 100 UCD students who interviewed the storytellers and processed the audio clips. "The project is about bringing different histories together in one place," ross said.

Throughout the past year, students talked with individuals who represent different parts of Yolo County's history, including tribal chairman Marshall McKay of Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, native Californian Wyatt Cline, farmer Pollock, miner Ben Adamo and ecologist Ann Brice.

"To go forward, you got to look back," ross said. "Who's here, how did they get here."

The storytellers give their histories as part of the Restore/Restory's audio tour, which festivalgoers can take Oct. 20 and at future visits to the preserve.

ross called the audio tour "an amazing way to learn the history of the preserve." It can also be accessed online and downloaded onto smartphones and other devices.

Also online, at <http://restorerestory.org>, those interested can see "digital murals" of archival and contemporary images, a story map of community memories and a timeline of images, maps and historical documents. The website is expected to launch at the project's unveiling.

While Oct. 20 will be the debut of Restore/Restory, ross expects the free event to be "total fun," also including nature and culture walks, live music, hands-on activities for youth, basket-weaving demonstrations and guest speakers.

After the event, people can continue to use the website to learn more about Cache Creek and Yolo County's history, ross said.

"The intention of this project can be used for outreach and education," she said.

While Restore/Restory includes a variety of perspectives, ross said "there's many more people's stories we didn't cover."

"This is a first step and a way to get started," she said.

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