

**Samuel Thunder Rodriguez**

**Non-Federally Recognized Tribal Representative, Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe**

**CSU Campus Preference:** East Bay

**Qualified:**

Mr. Rodriguez has over five years of experience in tribal monitoring, consultation with various state agencies, including CSU East Bay and UC Berkeley. He currently serves as the Cultural Resource Office for his tribe. Mr. Rodriguez holds undergraduate degrees in both Anthropology, Archaeology, and Environmental Sciences.

**Tribal Chair Letter of Recommendation**

**References Contacted:**

Giorgi Hadi Curti Ph.D., Althea Asaro, Monica Ruth, and Patrick Treanor recommend the candidate.

**CSU East Bay Committee**

1. Tribal Representative (Non-Federally Recognized): Vacant
2. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized):
3. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized): Vacant
4. Tribal Representative (Federally Recognized): Vacant
5. CSU Representative: Vacant
6. CSU Representative: Vacant
7. CSU Native American Studies Representative: Vacant



## NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

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### UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

#### - NOMINATION FORM -

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The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) seeks nominees for the University of California (UC) Systemwide and Campus Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Implementation and Oversight Committees (pursuant to Section 8026 of the California Health and Safety Code).

If you are interested in serving or nominating a candidate please review the criteria below, complete the following application materials, and submit completed packet to the NAHC nominations subcommittee: 1) Indicate the position(s) sought for the nominee, 2) Attach a short biography or resume demonstrating that the nominee meets the criteria below; 3) Attach a letter of support or tribal resolution with this form; and 4) Attach a list of at least three references, with names, telephone numbers, and email addresses for each.

**Tribal Nominees:** Support letters or tribal resolutions for tribal nominees should be from Tribal governments, tribal community organizations or Institutional leadership organizations, include the strengths of the candidate, as well as any information that might be relevant to the NAHC reviewing committee.

**UC Nominees:** Support letters for UC nominees should include professional experience demonstrating the ability to work in collaboration with Native American tribes successfully on issues related to repatriation or museum collection management.

Please note, even if you are not selected in the initial appointment group the NAHC will keep your application on file for Committee positions that may become available in the future.

**Deadline:** Nomination packets are due on the date(s) indicated at [nahc.ca.gov/calnagpra/nominate](http://nahc.ca.gov/calnagpra/nominate).

## **QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Tribal Nominees**

Tribal Nominees must be a member of a federally or non-federally recognized California Indian tribe as defined by Section 8012 of the Health and Safety Code. And have at least five years of experience in any of the following:

- Repatriation of human remains and cultural items pursuant to the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;
- Cultural resources protection under tribal, state, and federal law; or
- Consultation with state and federal entities and agencies.

**Preference:** Preference shall be given to members of a California Indian tribe.

### **UC Nominees**

UC Nominees must be affiliated with or employed by the University of California and have the following:

1. A graduate degree in any of the following: Archaeology, Anthropology, Native American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Law, Sociology, Environmental Studies, or History, with a focus in California; and
2. A minimum of five years' experience working in his or her field of study.

**Note:** At least two UC nominees to the Systemwide one UC nominee to the Campus Committee(s) must be affiliated with an American Indian or Native American Studies program.

You are encouraged to submit a nomination if the nominee meets a majority of the requirements, even if you are unsure as to whether they meet a specific requirement. **In the event that you are uncertain as to whether a nominee may be qualified under a certain requirement, please include a brief explanatory statement supporting their qualifications in your nomination packet.** The NAHC shall consider all supporting materials and narrative to make a final determination of eligibility.

**Preference:** Preference shall be given to members who have demonstrated, through their professional experience, the ability to work in collaboration with Native American tribes successfully on issues related to repatriation or museum collection management.

## **COMMITTEE(S) SOUGHT**

Please indicate the Committee(s) to which the nominee is seeking appointment. If nominating for a campus committee(s), list the campus(es) where the nominee is interested in serving, in order of preference. Check all that apply. If a nominee selects both the UC Systemwide Committee and Campus Committee, their application will be considered for both Committees and they may be appointed to either, however at this time Committee members will only serve on one Committee at a time, unless the pool of candidates does not allow.

- ☒ UC Systemwide Committee (*if only Systemwide please skip to Nominator Information below*)
- ☒ Campus Committee (*please fill out Section A below*)



A. If the Nominee would like to serve on a Campus Committee, please fill out the following additional information.

Campus Committee (*Preferred Campus*): Cal State University Monterey Bay

Alternative campus(es) Nominee will consider (candidates are encouraged to complete this section, if possible):

- 1) CSU East Bay
- 2) CSU San Jose
- 3) UC Davis

## **SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **Nominator Information**

Name: Tony Cerda Title: Tribal Chairman/ Chief  
Tribal/UC Institutional Affiliation: Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe  
Email: Rumsen@Aol.com Phone: (909) 524-8041

### **Nominee Information**

Name: Samuel Thunder Rodriguez Title: Cultural Resource Officer  
Tribal/UC Institutional Affiliation: Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe  
Email: sathunder.sr@gmail.com Phone: 760 681 6860  
Position Sought: ☒ Tribal Nominee ☐ UC Nominee

### **Please attach:**

- (i) A short biography and, if desired, a resume or CV of the nominee,
- (ii) A tribal resolution or letter of support, and
- (iii) A list of at least three references, with names, telephone numbers, and email addresses for each.

Submit completed nomination packets to [NAHC@nahc.ca.gov](mailto:NAHC@nahc.ca.gov) or 1550 Harbor Blvd, Suite 100, West Sacramento, CA 95691 by the due date indicated at [nahc.ca.gov/calnagpra/nominate](http://nahc.ca.gov/calnagpra/nominate).

Incomplete packets will not be considered.



# COSTANOAN RUMSEN CARMEL TRIBE

POMONA OFFICE: 602 W FERNLEAF AVE POMONA CA 91766

S.F. OFFICE: P.O. BOX 29352 SAN FRANCISCO CA 94129

WEB: COSTANOANRUMSEN.ORG EMAIL: CRCT1992@GMAIL.COM

## TRIBAL COUNCIL

TONY CERDA  
CHAIRMAN

ROSIE PARRA  
VICE-CHAIR

CARLA MARIE MUÑOZ  
SECRETARY

BRENDA MUÑOZ  
TREASURER

STEVEN RODRIGUEZ  
SERGEANT OF ARMS

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

CONNIE ALMAGUER  
RALPH AVARADO  
OLGA GOMEZ  
FRANK PERALEZ  
VAL VILLA

## TRIBAL LIAISON & PUBLIC RELATIONS:

DESIREE MUÑOZ  
HENRY MUÑOZ  
SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ

SPIRITUAL ADVISOR:  
TINKER GOMEZ

June 18, 2025

To the Native American Heritage Commission and the University of California  
NAGPRA Implementation and Oversight Committee,

On behalf of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, we submit this letter in full and formal support of Cultural Resource Officer Samuel Thunder Rodriguez. Officer Rodriguez has worked in close collaboration with our Tribe in the respectful protection and preservation of sacred sites, ancestral remains, and cultural items under the principles of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

Officer Rodriguez has consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of NAGPRA policies, compliance procedures, and, most importantly, the spiritual and cultural significance these items and ancestors hold for our people. His approach reflects not only legal compliance but genuine cultural empathy, which is critical to any repatriation effort.

The Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe has had the honor of working with Officer Rodriguez on sensitive matters involving the treatment of our ancestors and sacred cultural heritage. He has shown professionalism, integrity, and an unwavering respect for Indigenous protocols. His advocacy for tribal consultation, community engagement, and ceremonial protection of our cultural resources is deeply appreciated and essential to the integrity of the NAGPRA process.

We strongly encourage your continued collaboration with Officer Samuel Thunder Rodriguez and express our unequivocal support for his involvement in any NAGPRA-related consultation, implementation, or oversight within the University of California system or under the guidance of the Native American Heritage Commission.

If any further information or clarification is needed, please do not hesitate to contact our Tribal Office.

With honor and respect,

To all our relations,



## Biography of Samuel Thunder Rodriguez

### Cultural Resource Officer – Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe

Samuel Thunder Rodriguez is a deeply respected Cultural Resource Officer for the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, whose life and work reflect a powerful convergence of traditional lifeways, academic training, and environmental stewardship. Born into a lineage rooted in ceremony, land-based knowledge, and ancestral responsibility, Samuel is not only a guardian of sacred sites and cultural materials, but also a practitioner of healing traditions recognized by his community.

Samuel's journey began in the sacred rhythm of tribal life. From a young age, he was immersed in ceremonial cycles that honored the land, the waters, and the spirits of those who came before. Raised among Elders, singers, and ceremonial leaders, he learned not just with his mind, but with his heart—through lived experience, seasonal rites, and the quiet discipline of observation. He was not told who he was; he lived who he was.

At the age of 13, Samuel answered the call to undertake the traditional fasting ceremony—a rite of passage central to his tribe's spiritual tradition. Over four days and nights without food or water, isolated in prayer and guided by ceremonial leaders, Samuel went into the mountains and emerged changed. In that deeply sacred ceremony, he was spiritually recognized and embraced as a bear and a healer Oress ama—one who carries the medicine of protection, introspection, and renewal. This role is not symbolic. It is lived. Samuel walks with the responsibility of healer in his community, tending not only to people but to the land, the elements, and the spirit of place.

With a foundation in tradition, Samuel pursued academic study to strengthen his advocacy in a world shaped by policy, development, and environmental change. He holds undergraduate degrees in Anthropology, Archaeology, and Environmental Science—a rare and potent blend that positions him at the intersection of cultural preservation and ecological responsibility. His academic work complements his ceremonial knowledge, allowing him to interpret cultural landscapes not only through maps and site records, but through the oral memory of the land and its original people.

As a Cultural Resource Officer, Samuel plays a critical role in consultation, (Cal) NAGPRA, site protection, and cultural education. He has served as a Tribal monitor for major infrastructure and conservation projects throughout California, ensuring that ancestral lands are treated with dignity and that Native voices shape how those lands are managed. He works closely with state agencies, archaeologists, and environmental planners—but always from a foundation of tribal sovereignty and Indigenous worldview.

In every layer of his work, Samuel advocates for a holistic approach to land stewardship—where sacred sites are not “points of interest,” but living parts of an interconnected system that includes plant relatives, water beings, animal nations, and the intangible energies that dwell in place. He brings ceremony to his work, and his work to ceremony.

Whether leading prayer at dawn over a coastal bluff or reviewing an environmental impact report with a land use agency, Samuel Thunder Rodriguez remains what his ancestors and Elders intended him to be: a bridge between worlds, a protector of sacred knowledge, and a bearer of medicine in a time that deeply needs it.



**Giorgio Hadjicurti, Ph.D.**

**Co-Owner**, Cultural Geographics Consulting (CGC)

**Project Director**, Critical Ethnographer and Socio-Cultural Geographer

[www.culturalgeographics.com](http://www.culturalgeographics.com)

**Adjunct Professor** and Lecturer

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**Althea Asaro, M.A.**

**Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist)**

**District Native American Coordinator**

**PQS Principal Investigator, Prehistoric Archaeology**

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