LOMAKATSI Tribal Workforce Crew Manager Joe Ochoa works with a tribal crew member on felling techniques. A key component of the juniper thinning project on the Fort Bidwell Reservation was for the nonprofit ecological restoration organization Lomakatsi Restoration Project to provide tribal workforce development, training them in skills needed for ecological restoration.

**Tribes cooperate on restoration project**

**By Jean Bilodeaux**  
**Special to the Record**

Officials from the non-profit Lomakatsi Restoration Project, the Fort Bidwell and Pit River tribes met last week to evaluate the results of the work done on the Tribal Forest Management and Ecosystem Restoration Project that has just been completed on 50 acres of juniper on the Fort Bidwell Indian Reservation.

All agreed that the project was a success on many venues and opens the possibility for more collaborative projects in the future.

The project was aimed at the restoration and recovery of the tribal lands while providing training and work experience for tribal workforce members.

“Besides protecting, preserving and restoring the tribal lands, we’ve trained some men who are very promising career-wise and will go on to other projects. We are extremely happy with the success of this venture,” said tribal administrator Eletta Quiboloy.

When the tribe was first funded for the Tribal Forest Management and Ecosystem Restoration Project the tribal members weren’t sure just how to proceed. The tribal counsel members looked at the Pit River tribe and discovered a Lomakatsi connection in some of their projects.

The Lomakatsi Restoration Project is a non-profit, grassroots organization that develops and implements forest and watershed restoration projects and programs in Oregon and Northern California. Since 1995 the group has developed a proven record of success implementing restoration projects across thousands of acres of forests and miles of streams.

Recently the Pit River tribe, with the help of Lomakat see Tribes, page 5
Tribes from front page

Training valuable

The Pala Band of Mission Indians, have entered into a 3.5 million acre stewardship agreement project, the largest in the nation.

“We could have hired workers from Florida to come and clear the land, but with us supervising the restoration and in partnership with the Fort Bidwell Paiute and Pit River tribes, we were able to train and build local tribal workforce capacity,” explained Marko Bey, Executive Director of Lomakatsi.

The juniper clearing project was selected because during the last 140 years, the western juniper has been expanding its range, encroaching dramatically into the sagebrush steppe ecosystem. This encroachment was aided by the removal of fire from the landscape.

Historically, fire was the natural factor limiting juniper woodlands to rockier ridges. As fire was removed, through suppression efforts and cattle grazing, a population and range explosion began for the juniper. During this time, from once occupying only five percent to now occupying nearly half of the 6.5 million acres across the Modoc Plateau. The forest canopy closed and the ecosystem grew toward a monoculture, negatively affecting the sagebrush steppe dependent species, resulting in dwindling numbers of species such as sage-grouse, mule deer and pronghorn.

With funding obtained, the Lomakatsi, Fort Bidwell Paiute and Pit River tribes set a goal to protect and preserve the natural resources of the area and assist in restoring healthy lands and sustainable economies for the community.

“Allies come and go, but with the tribes collaborating we can become the first stewards of the land. Together we can treat the lands holistically,” said Belinda Brown, one of the coordinators and organizers of the project.

“The Fort Bidwell and Pit River tribes working together is symbolic of the healing of the land and the relationships, believing that united we can get the job done,” said Joe Ochoa, Lomakatisi Tribal Crew Manager.

JUNIPER thinning on Fort Bidwell reservation lands brought together members of three tribes, the Fort Bidwell Paiute, Klamath, and Pit River tribes. Tribal members all worked together to restore 50 acres of sage-steppe grasslands.

Submitted photos

Fort Bidwell Environmental Protection Administration Director Loyette Meza and Tribal Administration, as well as the Fort Bidwell Indian Community Council have been instrumental in achieving this tribal training workforce opportunity and restoration project.

“Lomakatsi is a very professional non-profit organization and is well able to help with our technical needs and to work with us on future projects,” said Quiboloy.

The Fort Bidwell Reservation consists of 3,750 acres, with a current enrollment of 347 members.