



# SOBOBA BAND OF LUISEÑO INDIANS

San Jacinto, CA

# Soboba History



EST. JUNE 19, 1883

The Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians is one of the federally recognized bands of Luiseño Indians in Southern California.

Established by Executive Order on June 19th, 1883. The Soboba Indian Reservation is nestled in the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountains



*Payómkawichum*  
*"People of the West"*

# Soboba History

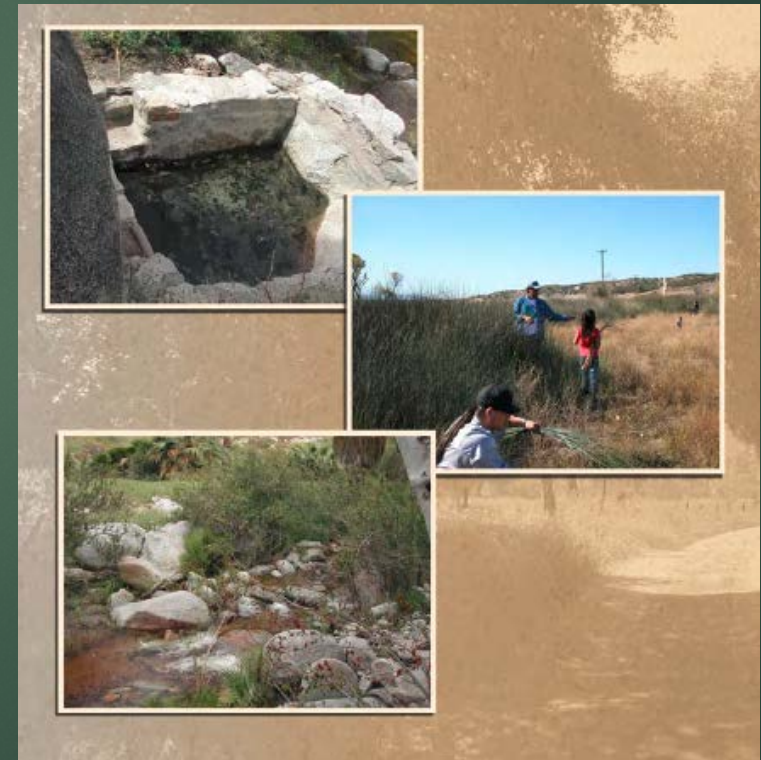


- ▶ Tribe consisting of 1,320 members
- ▶ Tribal members of Cahuilla and Luiseño Ancestry
- ▶ 7,891 acres of land including newly acquired lands

# Soboba Today



- ▶ Multiple Departments and Entities
  - ▶ Tribal Administration
  - ▶ Parks & Recreation
  - ▶ Public Works
  - ▶ Soboba Casino
  - ▶ Country Club at Soboba Springs
  - ▶ Noli Indian School
  - ▶ Soboba Preschool



# Master Planning & Sustainability

- ▶ Land
  - ▶ Land Planning & Development
  - ▶ Schools
  - ▶ Hydrology & Flood Control
- ▶ Renewables & Sustainability
  - ▶ Wastewater Treatment For Irrigation Of Golf Course
  - ▶ Solar Energy

# Solar Energy



- ▶ Feasibility Study conducted by Optimum Group
- ▶ Pre-Development & Development
- ▶ Feasibility study determined that the average for a two-year study was a total of 15,613,000 kilowatt-hours or 15.613 megawatt hours
- ▶ Concluded that a 1.0 MW ac (VNEM) facility would serve planning areas A,B, and D, serving a total of 14 separate meters
- ▶ Additional 1.0 MV ac (VNEM) facility would serve Country Club and associated meters, with a total of 4 separate meters

# Solar Feasibility Study

- ▶ Carry out geographical research & analysis
- ▶ Perform site evaluation
- ▶ Conduct preliminary research on available solar programs
- ▶ Perform economic analysis
- ▶ Propose strategy

# Approach & Decision

- ▶ Various studies were conducted by the Tribe and Optimum Group, including environmental assessment and constraints report, geo-technical studies, etc.
- ▶ Grants Coordinator was able to secure DOE grant in the amount of \$1 million dollars for first solar phase
- ▶ Grants Coordinator secured additional grant in the amount of \$500,000 for Phase II
- ▶ The Tribe allocated \$5 million overall for the purpose of solar project development for three separate projects on the Reservation



# Case Studies

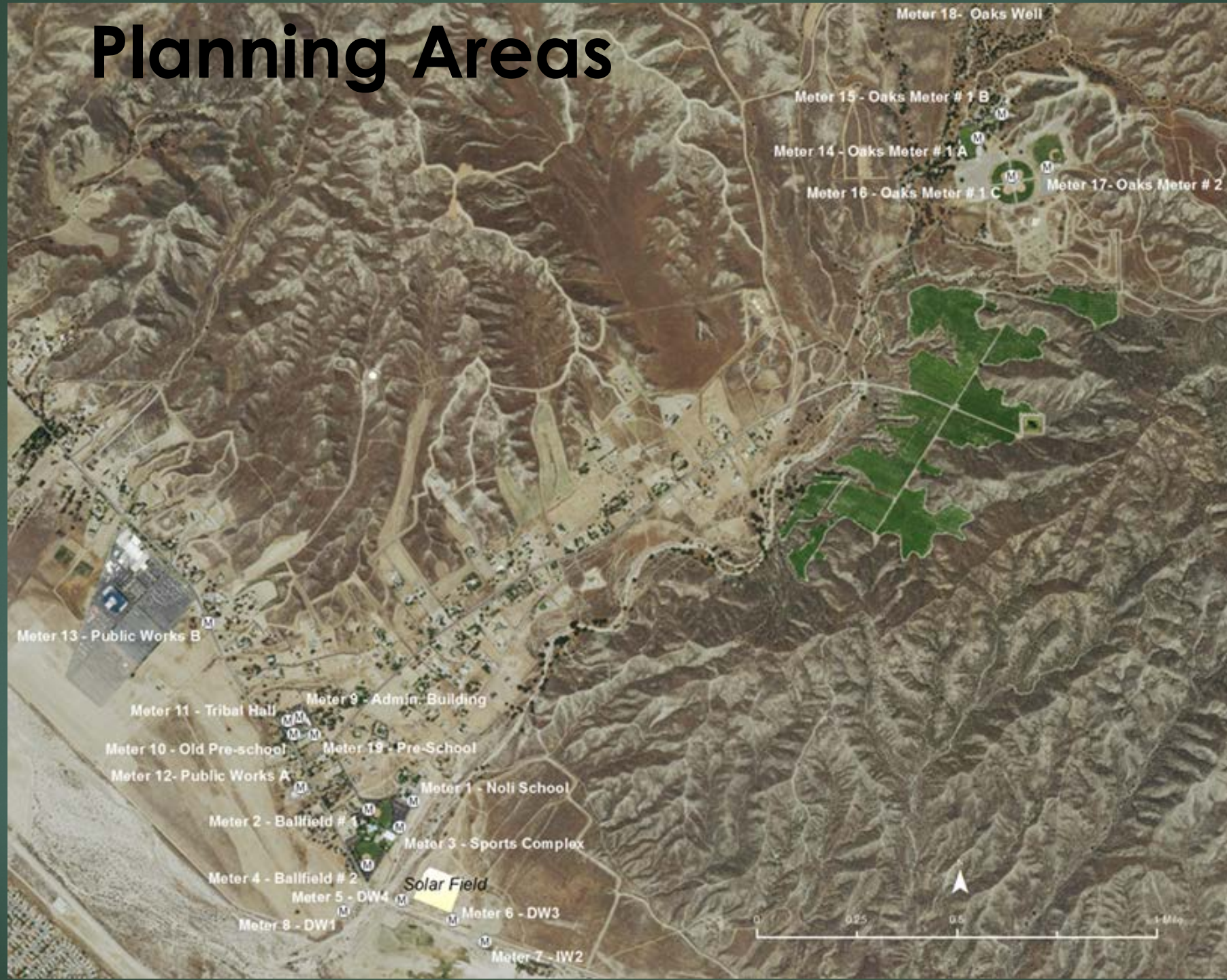


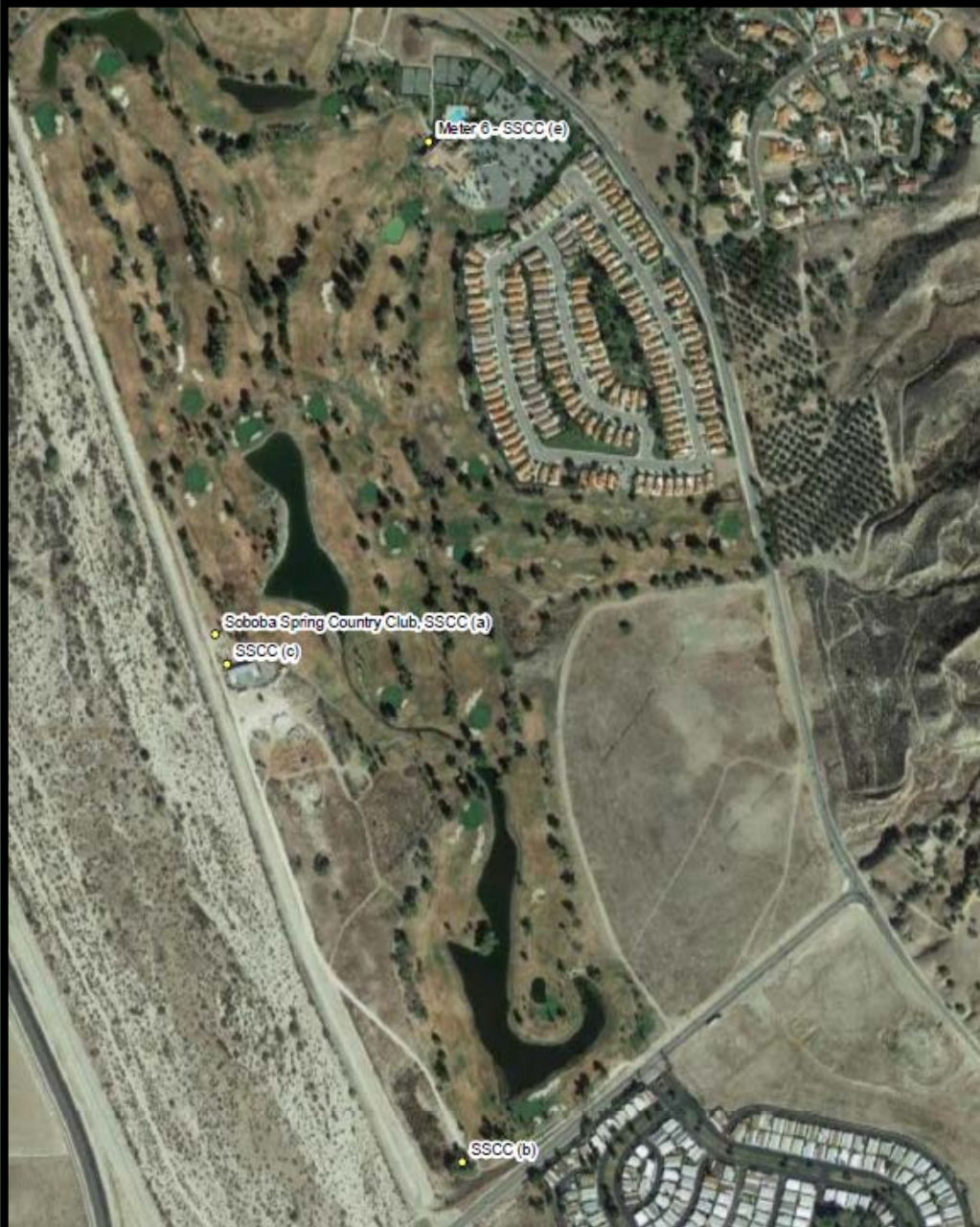
- ▶ Tribe hired legal counsel for guidance specifically on solar project
- ▶ Legal counsel had experience working with another tribe that had successfully incentivized tax credits for an outside investor in a Partnership Flip scenario
- ▶ Through his research, legal counsel identified other options for tax credits
- ▶ After a very long review process, it was concluded that ITC would not be feasible at the time
- ▶ The reason for this decision was based on the fact that DOE maintains a vested interest in equipment until the grant closes

# ROI & Benefits

- ▶ Initial solar project is projected to save \$6.2 million over the life of the system
- ▶ The second phase is projected to save \$6.2 million over the life of the system
- ▶ Projects are expected to generate a 14% rate of return
- ▶ These projects will benefit the Tribe in various ways such as:
  - ▶ Providing economic opportunities
  - ▶ Providing a more sustainable source of energy
  - ▶ Allowing for more tribal control of resources
  - ▶ Providing training opportunities and jobs for tribal members and staff

# Planning Areas





- Country Club and Golf Course Electric Meters
  - Total of four separate meters

# Solar Programs & Regulations

- ▶ Net Energy Metering (NEM)
- ▶ Virtual Net Energy Metering (VNEM)
  - ▶ Unique program to California and some other States
- ▶ Re-MAT PPA with Edison
- ▶ Soboba leadership chose to pursue the Virtual Net Energy Metering option: this allowed the Tribe to generate solar energy and obtain a generation credit at retail value. This option allowed for more than one meter to be allocated to the 1MW facility.

# Strategy



## Step 1 – Immediate Opportunities

- ▶ Administrative System – 1.257 MW DC (1 MW ac) VNEM for planning areas A,B & D
- ▶ Community Facility – 1.257 MW DC (1MW ac) VNEM for Country Club and Golf Course facilities

# RFP Process

- ▶ Successfully Completed RFP Process in 2015 for first solar phase
  - ▶ 2 CFR 200 / Soboba Procurement Policies
  - ▶ Received 6 Proposals
  - ▶ Wide pricing gap (\$2M – \$3M)
- ▶ Successfully Completed RFP Process in 2016 for second solar phase
  - ▶ Received 10 proposals
  - ▶ Wide pricing gap (\$1.7M - \$2.6M)

# Implementation

- ▶ EPC Contract Equipment Specifications
  - ▶ Warranties
  - ▶ Payment Schedules
- ▶ Interconnection Agreement/Aggregate Net Energy Metering (NEM)
  - ▶ Southern California Edison
  - ▶ Easements
  - ▶ Cost of Grid Upgrades/Connection
  - ▶ Rule 21/Renewable Energy Tariff



# Grant and Financing Process

- ▶ Grant Agreement Negotiations
- ▶ Environmental Clearance (NEPA)
- ▶ Budget Justification
- ▶ Federal ITC Consideration
  - ▶ Multiple Offers
  - ▶ Risk/Reward Considerations
  - ▶ Grant/ITC Complications

# Experiences & Lessons Learned

- ▶ Environmental Assessment is not required for the grant, however, it makes the process easier for the NEPA compliance requirements through DOE
- ▶ Interconnection agreement with Southern California Edison is extremely complex, time consuming, and costly
- ▶ Over a month after project construction complete before PTO was granted for Phase I project
- ▶ Customizing system to match tribal needs (security systems)
- ▶ Southern Edison initially limited the Tribe stating whole reservation was one parcel – Tribe reached out to the California Public Utilities Commission

# Initial Savings Calculations

- ▶ Phase I Solar Plant was operational five months of 2016
- ▶ SCE billing indicates a savings of 31.87% for those months

# Phase II – just completed!

- ▶ Funding through DOE was secured in the amount of \$500,000 for an additional 1 mw facility
- ▶ This will be used to offset costs associated with the Tribe's golf course and country club facilities
- ▶ Permission to Operate was granted by Southern California Edison at the beginning of June 2017

# Phase I – 1MW AC Completed & Operational













# Phase II Construction











# Questions & Contacts

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