Understanding Property Ownership in California:
A Guide to Geospatial Data Sources

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This tool was developed for the Tribal Stewardship Policy and Toolkit and is provided in the Basics of Property Law for Tribal Stewardship Toolkit Entry.
If you know of a geospatial land ownership data set that should be on this list, email us at
tribalaffairs@resources.ca.gov with "Tribal Stewardship Policy Map Resources" in the subject line.

Understanding current property ownership in a tribe's ancestral territory can be a key step in identifying opportunities for tribal stewardship through land return, collaboration, and access.

Property owners throughout California—the state, the federal government, non-tribal government landowners, and private landowners all play a role in advancing tribal stewardship over ancestral tribal territories. The geospatial resources below are intended to provide tribes with the tools to begin identifying landowners with whom they may choose to pursue stewardship arrangements.

Unless otherwise noted, the datasets identified below can be downloaded and used for additional geospatial analysis. This resource is intended as a starting point and may not be fully inclusive of all ownership types, may include out-of-date information, and is subject to change.

With the exception of CA Nature mapping tool, the California Natural Resources Agency is not affiliated with the following productions of the below resources and make no claims to the accuracy of the land ownership or tribal ancestral territories depicted in the maps.

Federal landowners

ArcGIS USA Federal Lands Map

- This downloadable map displays the lands in the United States managed by the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Defense, the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service, and includes Marine National Monuments and Wildlife Refuges. It pulls source data from PAD-US and federal agencies that are not included in PAD-US.

USGS Protected Areas Database Map

- "The Protected Areas Database of the United States (PAD-US) Explorer allows you to find areas protected for the primary purpose of biodiversity

conservation, as well as lands and waters that provide public access to nature. PAD-US is an aggregation of information from multiple agencies and organization to provide the most comprehensive source of public parks and protected areas in the United States." This map is produced by the US Geological Survey, a federal department. More information about the data can be found [here.](#)

Federal Lands Within Indian Country (Bureau of Indian Affairs)

- This map, produced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) depicts federal lands (including PAD-US data) and Indian Country.
- Find more data of interest on the [BIA Geospatial Support webpage](#).

California State and Local Government Landowners

The [California State Geoportal](#) is the best centralized source for finding land ownership data by state agency.

- The [California Multi-Source Land Ownership map layer](#), accessible through the Geoportal as the "California Land Ownership Map," provides "the best available statewide depiction of land ownership in California. It includes lands owned by federal agencies, state agencies, local government entities, conservation organizations, special districts, etc. It does not include lands that are in private ownership."

California State Lands Commission Open Data Hub

- The California State Lands Commission Open Data Hub website includes "a vast array of free public GIS data resources. Explore maps, applications, and geographic datasets to uncover valuable insights and support informed decision-making across the commission." It includes the following resources, highlighted here because they may be of particular interest to tribes:
  - [School Lands Dataset](#) and [School Lands Viewer](#) (the Dataset as a map)
  - [Granted Public Trust Lands](#)

California Protected Areas Database (CPAD)

- The California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) is a GIS dataset depicting lands that are owned in fee and protected for open space purposes by over 1,000 public agencies or non-profit organizations. CPAD

depicts the wide diversity of parks and open spaces in California, ranging from our largest National Forests and Parks to neighborhood pocket parks. It does not include military lands used primarily for military purposes, tribal lands, private golf courses or public lands not intended for open space, such as municipal waste facilities, administrative buildings.

California Nature: 30x30 Open Data Hub

- CA Nature is a suite of interactive mapping and visualization tools compiling statewide biodiversity, access, climate and conservation information to advance 30x30.

California Conservation Easement Database (CCED)

- The California Conservation Easement Database (CCED) contains lands protected under conservation easements. This includes easements held by land trusts and nonprofit organizations, local jurisdictions (city and county), and state and national governmental agencies. However, it does not include information on private land owners (name, address, etc.), temporary easements (less than 10 years), or which portions of a property are subject to the easement.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Lands Viewer

- "The CDFW Lands Viewer provides geospatial data about the CDFW's lands and facilities. The department manages over 1,100,000 acres of fish and wildlife habitat and these properties provide many opportunities for the public to hunt, fish, watch wildlife and learn about nature."

California State Parks GIS Data and Maps

- "California State Parks generates eight GIS datasets intended for free distribution and personal or public use. These datasets include: Park Boundaries, Routes, Buildings, Structures, Day Use Areas, Camping Areas, Parking Areas, and Park Entry Points."

California Water Boards Tribal Water Data Initiatives

- "The purpose of the Tribal Water Data Map is to increase awareness of and access to the Water Board's water data resources that intersect with Tribal matters and needs. The interactive map includes curated data layers that have been requested by California Native American Tribes (tribes) and tribal partners doing environmental or water related work."

Caltrans Environmental GIS Viewer

- "Caltrans Environmental GIS Viewer is a customized application tailored to the needs of the environmental community at Caltrans. The goals of this website are to provide a quick access to environmental spatial information to the users to assist them with spatial analysis and to provide crucial information regarding resources that are located within the boundaries of a planned project. Caltrans Environmental GIS Viewer was developed and maintained by the HQ Division of the Environmental Analysis, GIS staff." More information here.

Find State Surplus Real Property (Department of General Services)

- State-owned real property identified as excess to the programmatic needs of the controlling department is listed online for state use or for sale to local agencies, affordable housing sponsors, and the public pursuant to Government Code Section 11011 et seq.

Notices of Available Locally-Owned Surplus Land Map (California Department of Housing and Development)

- "Explore surplus local public land that may be suitable for affordable housing development. This map shows notices of availability that have been submitted by local agencies (cities, counties, and special districts) to HCD."

Private Landowners

Regrid Data

- Regrid is a for-profit company that maintains a nationwide set of parcel-level property data, including ownership data. Data is sourced directly from counties, states, and municipalities. This includes data digitized by Regrid that might otherwise be available only on paper maps from local government offices. Datasets are available for purchase.
- If you are looking for a specific property, some basic information, including owner, can be viewed for free online in the Regrid Property Map, though the data cannot be downloaded for additional mapping.

- Regrid runs a program to provide low-cost parcel-level land ownership datasets to nonprofits and academic researchers, you can learn more and fill out a request here.

Property Ownership by County

Generally, county governments maintain parcel-level property ownership data. The process to obtain these records, however, is unique for each county, and can be cumbersome and expensive. Many counties require public records requests for property owner information to be made in person. Please review the table below to find more information on how to access property records by County. CNRA makes no claims to the accuracy of this information, please defer to the County Assessor's office.