

JEN RICE Consults

GO BEYOND
planning FOR CHANGE
to being THE CHANGE
– TOGETHER

Tailored support for leaders
from the grassroots to the treetops who are
motivated to evolve and become more effective
teams, organizations, networks, and communities amidst
a new reality of standard operating turbulence...
for results that people see and feel



jen@jenriceconsults.com

jenriceconsults.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/humboldt-jen-rice/>

WHAT JEN DOES & WHY

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Consults

Do you feel like you rely on practices that, while familiar, frustrate people and get unsatisfying results? After a rich career tackling “wicked problems” and supporting myriad grassroots-to-treetops community leaders to do the same, **I am motivated to help us move beyond the patterns that hold us back across issues, institutions, and regions.**

Despite a great deal of heart, soul, sweat, and resources invested, **there is a widespread sense we are falling short while burning out.** Problems are more complex, interwoven, and intractable. Stakes are higher. Public trust in institutions is plummeting. Urgency and critique are intensifying. “Needles” measuring key outcomes barely move – when we can get started. Overwhelm depletes capacity and limits us to sticking with comfortable yet outdated ways of leading organizations and networks.

We are busier than ever keeping public-serving **organizational and strategic machinery (largely military frameworks of previous centuries) limping along** with the equivalent of duct tape and bailing wire. Challenges we face have evolved far beyond those paradigms, tools, and mindsets. We and our organizations need to evolve, too.

Time and again I find, and the science supports, that **taking a moment to step back, listen, understand, co-create, experiment, and evolve leadership styles, agreements, and organizational cultures and systems required** for today’s world (and specifically for the context and the folks who need them) has immediate, powerful results.

With trust they will emerge more capable of leading effectively in a world of standard operating turbulence, I love working with today’s courageous leaders who invest in the relationships required to effectively have challenging conversations and navigate disruption, a shared sense of purpose, cohesion that inspires next-level collective leadership, adaptive strategy, and – an oft overlooked ingredient – group mindsets, behaviors, and agreements essential to sustain desired changes.

TAILOR THE APPROACH

Motivated clients are the guide. Sometimes solo, sometimes with consulting partners, we create the conditions for you to uncover a strong sense of common ground and operational agreements required to implement your priorities and get results – together. We are not yesterday’s consultants who “do” their expertise to you and the community, regardless of context.

DEVELOP CO-OWNERSHIP

Shifting away from the 20th Century expertise consulting model of doing “to” teams and communities, we first assume we don’t know. We listen, ask superb questions, help everyone make sense of what we hear together, and create next steps from shared understanding and interests. Everyone who sees themselves in the findings and takes part co-owns – and lives – the results.

PRODUCE RELEVANT, PRAGMATIC STRATEGY

Instead of an overwhelming strategic plan that collects dust while you go back to the grind, build a collective sense of purpose and priorities that live in the individuals and group to guide daily actions. Become bold while understanding and working together. Drop what arises as unnecessary or problematic. Double down on what is working well. Create rough proposals. Seek and incorporate feedback. Surface and agree on the priorities most have been dreaming about! Chunk it down to motivating, bite-sized tasks, timelines, sideboards, and learning objectives.

GROW & PRACTICE ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP SKILLS & A LEARNING MINDSET

The highest form of care for anything – including ourselves – is to help it, and us, be and do better. Only by constantly learning (and modeling what we are learning) are we able to effectively lead during times of standard operating turbulence. We move a lot, spin great playlists, and have fun.

ABOUT JEN RICE Consults



JEN HAS LIVED, LED, AND STUDIED GRASSROOTS, ORGANIZATIONAL, COLLABORATIVE, AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE amidst the new normal "standard operating turbulence." Across her rich career, a throughline has been bringing diverse multi-sector groups together to imagine and innovate new realities, get better results, and become better humans, partners, organizations, and communities in the process. She has been designing, leading, learning from, and adapting this work for decades, with a focus on the leadership of peoples and regions commonly left out of planning processes, socio-economic systems, and opportunities.

WITH DEGREES IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT from Fielding Graduate University ('22) and Humboldt State University ('94), Jen brings broad perspective and experience from an adventurous career. She has innovated, built dynamic teams, and produced transformative results in federal land management, watershed restoration, community engagement and partnership-building, collaborative policy, planning, and infrastructure development, strategic organizational evolution, grassroots grantmaking, community leadership- and capacity-building, systems-scale racial equity, Indigenous cultural revitalization, relational community organizing, human-centered design, and more.

WORKING WITH THE GRASSROOTS TO THE TREETOPS IN NONPROFIT & COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY LEADERSHIP for 25 years in two positions, Jen created conditions for leaders, teams, organizations, networks, and multi-sector "communities of practice" to listen, experiment, learn, lead, and evolve together as the world changed. Examples of her impacts on California's Redwood Coast region include the Redwood Region Climate and Community Resilience Hub ([CORE Hub](#)), the [Humboldt COAD](#), [True North Organizing Network](#), and the [Humboldt Bay Regional Trail System](#).

RECENT CONSULTING PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- Conducting — or supporting clients to conduct — internal and/or external listening campaigns, using the results to convene leaders of one or more agencies, tribes, or community members to: co-create a regional approach to climate resilience, coalesce a sense of cohesion and priorities under new city leadership, surface interests in design of a new public land welcome center to include Indigenous ceremonial facilities, and establish public priorities for a formative state agency's master planning effort.
- Designing and facilitating half-day, day-long, and multi-day co-creative design sessions that support diverse groups to simultaneously improve cohesion, relationships, and partnerships, applied learning, practice of desired mindsets-behaviors-culture, shared purpose, collaborative innovation, adaptive strategy, feedback loops, agreements, and accountability.
- Supporting formative networks to seek out leaders and organizations with shared interests to forge common purpose and strategy, pursue resources, co-create experiments, learn, and adapt together — for instance, to upgrade the timber-lumber supply chain to incorporate forest and fire resilience and expand workforce opportunities.
- Assisting formative and evolving nonprofit leadership teams to better connect with and understand community needs, improve the health of organizational culture, establish or refresh purpose and priorities, co-create strategic timelines, forge stronger partnerships, make clear agreements and accountability systems, and evaluate progress.

RECENT TESTIMONY



Jen has a remarkable ability to quickly discern the fundamentals of why and how an organization needs to think and adapt to meet its goals. She did not rely on rusty techniques or fluff but quickly helped us develop and discover practical, team-derived strategies and tactics to ensure that change is achieved and is durable. She helped our non-profit Board immensely. We are now on track to escape our flawed assumptions, moving decisively to shared goals, thanks to Jen's guidance. Highly recommended.

- Career Scientist and Nonprofit Founder

You unlocked the power that our staff has to move this work forward. You asked us great questions that really got us thinking outside of our day-to-day work.

- Statewide Nonprofit Program Manager

Jen leads with insight, creativity, courage, experience, and thoughtfulness. She has both on-the-ground and high-level strategy expertise that she uses to ensure collaborative outcomes that are "just right" for the process. I admire her creativity and commitment to kindness, inclusivity.

- State Agency Project Manager

Jen takes you on a journey of discovery through an interactive and engaging process that leads you and your organization to experiment with and test processes and conclusions [so you can] develop the best practices for you and your organization.

- Local Governments Chief Administrator



The tribal table discussion was so powerful and awesome. [The facilitator] did an outstanding job of creating a safe space for those discussions.

- Tribal Planning Table Participant, Regional Economic Development Initiative

Jen's process allows people to derive meaning from collective input, leading to priorities and solutions that emerge organically rather than being imposed from the outside. And that's where the magic happens. People are drawn into the conversation and begin to connect the dots, make their own meaning, and take ownership of what comes next.

Whether in interviews or large-scale public engagements, Jen translates complex, sometimes conflicting viewpoints into shared, visible narratives— literally putting words on walls — to establish a foundation of common ground.

Jen doesn't just facilitate dialogue; her work transforms how people engage with one another. Her ability to surface and honor different perspectives fosters trust, creating the conditions for productive action. I am impressed by how Jen can turn division into direction, skepticism into ownership, empowering overlooked voices to become

driving forces for change. Jen is truly a skilled, thoughtful, and impactful leader and facilitator.

- Multi-Generation Family Ranch Co-Owner

To work with Jen Rice is like finding the perfect partner in a music jam session. She's someone who intuitively gets the theme you're laying out, harmonizes to make it fuller, then brings her creative genius and skills to lift it to new levels of power, durability, and relevancy.

In a community or institutional context this means you can expect in Jen someone who will listen deeply to your goals, bring skills of community building and inclusivity, and elevate your vision in its practical application. Though it feels like magic when you see your aspirations take form with Jen's support, it is in reality the result of values that put the client and community first and skills honed over a lifetime of successful projects combined with knowledge gained from theory and practice.

And she's fun!

- Former National Community Organizing Nonprofit Board President

HOW WE WORK

STRATEGIC EVOLUTION OF GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, NETWORKS, AND COMMUNITIES REQUIRES:

Investment in listening, mutual understanding, strong relationships, and collective skill-building for productive, **healthy communication and growth** through (necessary) tensions, differences, and conflicts.

STRONG SHARED MOTIVATION to pursue **change together**; robust engagement of diverse, divergent perspectives, experiences, and roles.

Leaving behind tools, processes, and habits that no longer serve us amidst a state of standard operating turbulence -- shifting to curiosity, adaptive leadership, generative methods of engagement, co-creation, experimental learning and feedback/accountability practices.

COMMITTED LEADERSHIP AND A CULTURE that **supports desired strategic and structural changes** – like internal "software" – including practicing and reinforcing productive behaviors.

Acknowledging and mitigating power dynamics, including full participation of traditionally marginalized groups in a given setting.

WORK HAPPENS IN PRAGMATIC DESIGN SESSIONS PLANNED:

To accomplish work in real time, in an **INTENSIVE format** (minimum two hours, optimally more) with enough time for people to be heard and understood, to improve group relationships and/or cohesion, practice productive behaviors and supportive accountability, learn together, co-create proposals, provide feedback, and come to clear agreements.

To follow review of and reflection on **advance material** to maximize collaborative group time.

With rough agendas while encouraging/**adapting to emergent group wisdom**.

To iterate, reflect on, and **internalize insights and results over time** (even a short period). One-offs are not often effective.

For comfortable, inviting, well-lit venues with ample, flat, unobstructed **WALL AND WINDOW SPACE** allowing **active shifts between small and large groups**, optimally offering outdoor work and break options. Healthy food, drink are provided by client.

CONSULTANT / S:

Actively mix **specialized facilitation, education, practice, results production, feedback, and coaching** in every step.

Focus on HOW we interact with clients – what we need of each other, what emerges that feels most important to focus on –more than a scripted scope of work that limits our ability to adjust for and adapt to emerging opportunities.

Support **groups to do their own listening, sense-making, collaborative production, and reflection** rather than do it for them (via surveys, reports, and so forth) if at all possible, so **they internally co-xown the results**.

Rely on **regular communication with client** to co-design an approach and adapt as needed. We do not facilitate others' agendas.

Share success of and/or challenges encountered in the process with client sponsor/s.

We have all the information we need to make a change; it isn't a matter of facts, it is a matter of longing – having the will to imagine and implement something else.

- Adrienne Marie Brown



SAMPLE CONSULTING PROJECTS: 2022–PRESENT

- Assisting a state task force on fire resilience to engage and learn from groups, tribes, and districts implementing innovative watershed and forest health solutions on the ground across California.
- Convening tribes across NW CA to uncover and co-design ideal shared cultural uses of and public communications at one of the first sites a federal land management agency is returning to Native people.
- Convened boards of emerging nonprofits serving NW CA to co-create clear shared organizational purpose, decision-making guidance, priorities, and strategic timelines for initial services.
- Supported a struggling 50-year old nonprofit to reconnect with communities it serves, understand shared reinvention interests and possibilities, and rebuild with an "essentialized" sense of purpose.
- Supported and coached a new state agency to generatively engage marginalized rural communities in, for most, their first experience with a [public planning process](#) in that area. Sought out residents of a remote rural region for 1-1 conversations. Utilized the results to design and facilitate a very well-attended co-creative public workshop in a remote rural region. Assisted grassroots interests to connect and engage the agency in partnership and proposal development.
- Supported diverse parties to seek out partners interested in upgrading the timber-lumber supply chain to incorporate forest and fire resilience and expand workforce opportunities.
- Facilitated an innovative group of catalyst staff, the management team, and then all staff of a statewide watershed restoration nonprofit to evolve organizational culture and practices to become more relevant to and engaging partner of diverse communities and tribal nations, improving overall productivity and effectiveness.

CITY OF ARCATA: SYNERGY TO STRATEGY. Designed and conducted listening sessions with city manager, directors, deputies, and managers. Coalesced and illustrated results. Produced advance review and reflection materials. Convened the group in a day-long design session to review data results, identify shared interests and priorities, and co-create pilot upgrades to internal culture and systems while identifying and practicing behaviors the group requested of each other.

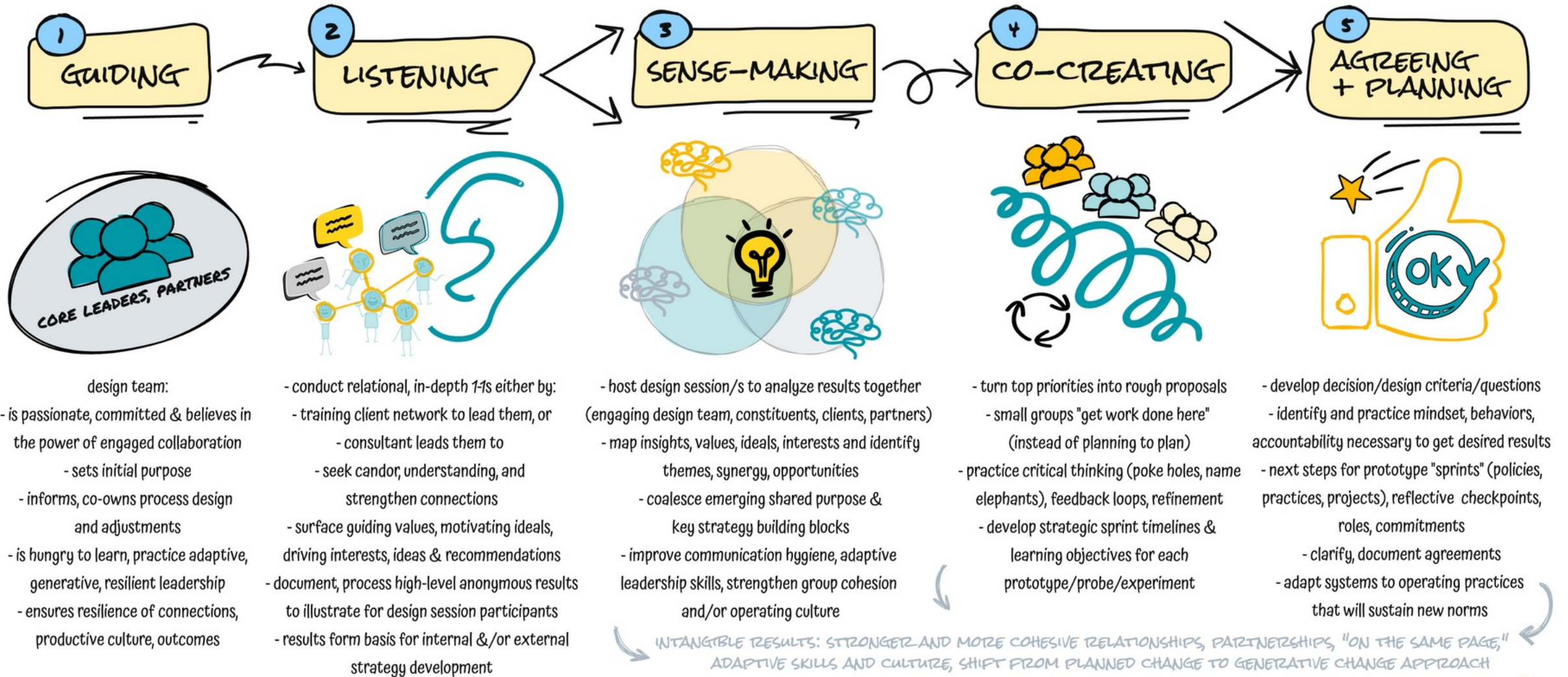
RRRISE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & TRIBAL PLANNING TABLE FACILITATION. Worked with [ThinkPlace US](#) from fall to spring 2024 to engage residents across Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties who are not often engaged in economic development efforts during the planning phase of the state's multi-year pandemic economic recovery initiative. Facilitated tribal representatives and Native-led nonprofits to explore how traditional economic development frameworks and assumptions have not worked well for indigenous populations, surface examples of Native-led economic successes that need to be explored, identify regional opportunities to support Native communities' economic resilience, and consider ways to establish a regular means of supporting this type of collaborative effort. After convening Native participants in person, she [summarized the Tribal Planning Table meeting results for an April 2024 Convening Report](#).

HUMBOLDT COUNTY CLIMATE RESILIENCE STRATEGY. Assisting the County CAO and department heads to co-create a cross-organizational purpose, and strategy for becoming a climate resilient organization, partner, and community. Interviewed 30 representatives with climate-related responsibilities including County elected and staff leadership, cities, tribes, special districts, and regional agencies to synthesize priorities and needs. Used co-creative approaches to convene department heads throughout 2024 and early 2025 to pursue a collaborative working culture, a shared purpose and definition of climate resilience, and a strategy for experimentally embedding a cross-functional team in the organization. Out of this work, at the CAO's request, consulted with tribal leaders to draft a proposal for co-design of Tribal Liaison functions across departments, with tribes (funding to be determined).

HUMBOLDT COUNTY COAD – COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER. During the pandemic, in previous role at a regional community foundation, brought community leaders and funders together to form the region's first Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD). A year later, as a consultant, supported COAD network establishment and nonprofit development initiation. Facilitated COAD collaborative meetings to create productive culture, systems, structures, and working groups. As over 200 earthquakes and 11 atmospheric rivers hit the region in late 2021 and early 2022, co-led successful establishment of COAD disaster response coordination systems for three months, with a base of operations that shifted between the most impacted community of Rio Dell and the County's Office of Emergency Services.

CO-CREATING STRATEGY & COHESIVE TEAMS IN A TURBULENT WORLD

BASIC PROCESS OUTLINE -- WHERE APPLICABLE



The biggest value is in doing (owning, creating) the work together - not leaving the analysis and planning to a consultant. Phases can be grouped together or separated in a range of convenings. For simple/initial efforts, 3-4 phases could be one full day. For more complicated efforts (e.g. internal and external strategy), more convenings/days are required for best results. Listening campaign results are plentiful, and a time-consuming gold mine to assess. Intensive, collaborative design work is best completed in half-day or full-day "crucible-style" design sessions. The more varied participation in any step, (e.g. including people closest to the issues/systems at issue) the stronger (and broader) the ownership, results relevancy, transparency, and likelihood for effective implementation, learning, and adaptation.

JEN RICE: EMPLOYMENT HIGHLIGHTS



DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY STRATEGIES & SENIOR ADVISOR: HUMBOLDT AREA FOUNDATION / WILD RIVERS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, 2011–2021

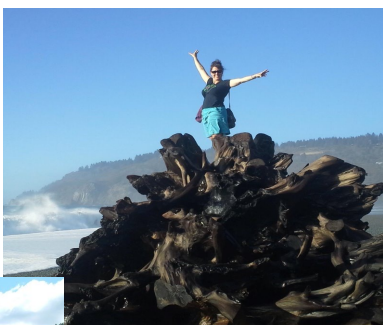
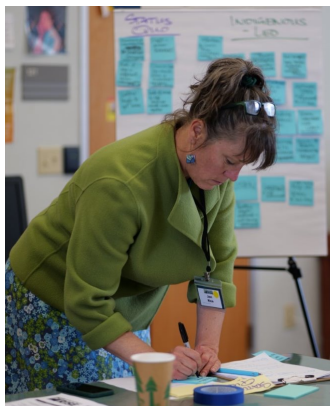
- Responsible for directing community-led change initiatives and capacity-building programs such as the Native Cultures Fund to revitalize culture and language across the state, Cascadia Center for Leadership, and Northern California Assn. of Nonprofits for skills development and technical assistance.
- Co-founded community initiatives to support grassroots-driven efforts like cultural burning and tribal candidate forums and to help organizations and agencies across the region to work and learn together to improve practices and results.
- Convened leaders and funders who formed Redwood Region Climate and Community Resilience Hub (COREHub) and the Humboldt Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) – collaboratives driving leadership in regional economic/community development and preparedness with tribal-specific working groups.
- Conducted grassroots grantmaking programs and initiated the first collaborative donor giving cohort.
- Raised and proactively granted \$500K to tribes and food and housing security organizations across four counties to address dual impacts of devastating wildfires during the pandemic.
- Brought human-centered design approaches to groups and organizations in the region to improve community engagement and collaborative decision-making.
- Coached/facilitated institutions to improve services to marginalized communities – for instance painstakingly working with a rural county’s Health and Human Services Dept. to first acknowledge and then form a partnership with a non-federally acknowledged Tribe during the pandemic to ensure services were delivered to Native people.
- Managed foundation properties -- a ranch, redwood forest, and community center. Served on leadership team responsible, for example, for assets, HR, and decision-making during two executive director transitions, and led two organizational strategy updates. Consolidated and streamlined programmatic and administrative systems, especially public-facing ones.

CO-DIRECTOR, MANAGER, & PLANNER: NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICES (NRS) DIVISION OF REDWOOD COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY (RCAA) , 1996–2011

- Formed, facilitated, and led robust collaborative and community engagement for visioning, planning, designing, funding, and management of myriad innovative plans, projects, and initiatives that fostered community support, attracted partners and funders, and expedited implementation.
- Modeled for, partnered with, and coached local, regional, and state agencies to improve public engagement practices – receiving awards for this work, including from the California Chapter of the American Planning Assn. helping Caltrans to better support transportation-disadvantaged communities.
- Established and facilitated several regional multi-agency collaborative efforts and engaged the California Transportation Commission to update active transportation policies. Innovated a number of regional efforts, including the creation of a multi-use trail system, a related interpretive signage template system, and community forests expansion.
- Co-convened state and federal regulatory agencies with influence on watershed restoration activities to streamline and coordinate regulatory practices.
- Planned and implemented watershed restoration projects to improve in-stream salmonid habitat and eliminate sedimentation sources in her first five years.
- Led internal strategic plans and reorganizing initiatives, organizational systems streamlining and updates, innovative hiring and teambuilding practices, and partner- and funder-relations.

LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES: USFS, NPS, & HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY, 1989–1996. Worked on a hot shot crew, as a backcountry ranger, and as a university lecturer to pay for an undergraduate degree. For federal agencies, mapped soils, plant communities, and hydrologic conditions, led CCC and NPS crews to remove large populations of invasive plants, managed prescribed natural fires, engaged visitors and conducted research on user data, and developed interpretive signage. Redesigned and taught a soil science lecture-lab course three days/week for two years. Led a volunteer community service nonprofit program, leadership conferences, student representation, statewide lobbying effort and named student of the year by Humboldt State University.

ABOUT JEN RICE Consults



Just ask if you'd like more detailed qualifications, process examples, or accessible background materials.

JEN HAS LIVED, LED, AND STUDIED GRASSROOTS, ORGANIZATIONAL, COLLABORATIVE, AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE in the context of the new normal "standard operating turbulence." Across her rich career, a throughline has been bringing diverse, multi-sector groups together to imagine and innovate new realities, get better results, and become better humans, organizations, and communities in the process. Jen has been visioning, planning, catalyzing, leading, learning, and adapting for decades, with a focus on the leadership of peoples and regions commonly left out of planning processes, socio-economic systems, and opportunities.

DEGREES IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

from Fielding Graduate University ('22) and Humboldt State University ('94) are combined with rich perspective from an adventurous career. Jen started out in federal land management, fire suppression, and watershed restoration. She has innovated cutting edge community engagement, collaborative public infrastructure and policy development, grassroots grantmaking, grassroots/nonprofit/government/network leadership- and capacity-building, and support for community-led initiatives and Indigenous cultural revitalization. Throughout, she has established networks and organizations dedicated to relational values-based community organizing, community-led disaster preparedness, climate and energy resilience, and more.

TANGIBLY IMPROVING COMMUNITIES – WITH THE GRASSROOTS TO THE TREETOPS

As a nonprofit and community philanthropy leader in two positions over 25 years. Jen **created the conditions for exemplary teams, organizations, networks, and multi-sector "communities of practice" to listen, experiment, learn, adapt, and evolve together as the world changed.** Funders and partners came to her to develop and lead millions in complex initiatives and projects. She led the strategic reinvention of both organizations roughly every three years to keep pace with changing needs and priorities on the ground. Recent examples of Jen's impact on California's Redwood Coast region include [True North Organizing Network](#), the [North Coast Equity Alliance](#), the [Redwood Region Climate and Community Resilience Hub \(CORE Hub\)](#), and the region's first [Community Organizations Active in Disaster \(COAD\)](#) -- the latter two with dedicated tribal work groups.

JEN TAILORS A MIX OF ENGAGED FACILITATION, LEARNING, & PRACTICE FOR EACH PROJECT.

Her philosophy and techniques arise from a collage of relational community organizing, human-centered or co-design, dialogic organizational development, and professional coaching practices. She works with other consultants who share interests and skills, groups **hungry to improve how they work together and leaders who are ready to evolve mindsets, behaviors, practices, strategy, and systems to get more effective results.** Often these groups achieve beyond what they assume possible – **creating, living, and evolving the "plan" together.**