

About Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians



Survival has always been a central part of the history of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

Cow Creek Umpqua people, known since time immemorial as the Nahánkhuotana of the Umpqua, have deep connections to the land, water and natural resources that unite them on their ancestral homeland. For centuries, they lived in the forests and rugged mountains Umpqua and Rogue River Valleys. They spoke Takelma, their ancestral language, which means “those living alongside the river.” Their families lived and hunted together in the meadows, forests and riverbanks of the vast area, following the seasons. Cow Creek Umpqua people gathered huckleberries high in the mountains along the Rogue-Umpqua Divide, and fished for salmon and lamprey in the sun of South Umpqua Falls. Steelhead, berries, acorns, camas and other natural foods influenced where Cow Creek Umpqua people made their camps each summer and winter.

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When the arrival of fur trappers, miners, gold rushers, and missionaries flooded Oregon and California in the 19th century, the Cow Creek Umpqua way of life began to be in danger. They became desperate for safety, food and stability. Attempting to secure peace for their people, in 1853 the bands of the Cow Creek Umpqua signed one of the country’s first treaties with the U.S. Government. It was signed at the confluence of Council Creek and Cow Creek in Douglas County, and thus the government gave them their modern name today, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

Authored by: Lindsay Campman, Communications and Marketing Director for Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians



Intertribal Canoe Journey July 2023 CCBUTI

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Chinook Fishing On The McKenzie River

But the treaty was pitiful. For \$12,000 and a few barrels of goods, the Cow Creek Umpqua ceded their land for what they hoped would be good health and protection from violent conflicts that later became the Rogue River Wars. They were shepherded onto temporary reservations, where disease and starvation quickly killed two-thirds of the Tribal people, including the head man who signed the treaty, Chief Miwaleta.

Soon after, the U.S. government began moving Cow Creek Umpqua people to the new Grande Ronde reservation 265 miles north. Terrified, many chose to flee to the mountains rather than live on either the temporary reservation at Table Rock or the Grand Ronde reservation. For the next 100 years, they practiced their traditions in hiding, and the Takelma language faded from memory. The brave and proud Cow Creek Umpqua families ultimately understood that a bitter, forced assimilation would ensure the survival of their children.

While treaties with the United States are defined by the U.S. Constitution as the “law of the land,” every treaty the U.S. Government has entered with a Native American Tribe has been broken. In 1954, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians were involuntarily terminated as a recognized Tribe under the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act.



Red Hand Print Amara Mata

After years of grassroots campaigns and persistent organization and fundraising, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians was officially restored as a federally recognized Tribe on December 29, 1982, when President Ronald Reagan signed the bill.

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Missing and Murdered Indigenous People/Women Crisis
May 5, 2024 Event

Today, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians is one of 574 federally recognized Tribal governments in the United States of America, and one of nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. The Tribal Government provides critical services such as health care, housing, education, elder care, social services, child welfare, transportation, and employment opportunities to its nearly 2,000 citizens.

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians is now one of the largest employers in Southern Oregon. With nearly 1,000 employees across a wide-range of government services and businesses, the Cow Creek Umpqua offer Tribal citizens as well as community members employment with a robust benefit package and a lifelong career path. In addition to the Tribal Government, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians operates the award-winning and nationally recognized Seven Feathers Casino Resort, and a multitude of additional tourism and hospitality outlets in Canyonville such as Seven Feathers RV Resort, 7 Feathers Truck & Travel Center, and Creekside Hotel & Suites.

Diversifying the Cow Creek Umpqua economic portfolio beyond gaming, the Tribal Government also owns Anvil Northwest, a creative design agency; agricultural businesses K-Bar Ranches and Seven 82; Takelma Roasting Company, Umpqua Indian Utility Cooperative, Umpqua Technologies, and Umpqua Ventures. The Tribal Government also strongly believes in philanthropy, standing up the Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation which routinely gives over \$1 million in grants back to dozens of non-profit organizations in the community each year.

Without a traditional reservation of their own, the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe has been considered a “landless Tribe.” However, they have worked to purchase and reacquire 37,000 acres of their own ancestral homeland. In 2017, more than 17,000 acres of Cow Creek Umpqua ancestral territory were restored to the Tribe by Congress. Today, those lands are managed responsibly and traditionally so that all Tribal citizens will remain connected to them for seven generations into the future.

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