



March 28, 2014

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Ecosystems, Tribal and Public Affairs
Attention: Michael J. Szerlog, Manager
Seattle, WA 98101

GOVERNMENT

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(541) 672-9405

FAX NUMBER

(541) 673-0432

RE: Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe Five Year Wetland Program Plan

Dear Mr. Szerlog,

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Natural Resource Department, is pleased to present our "Five Year Wetland Program Plan". This plan is fully endorsed by the Tribe and will be essential in the management of wetland habitats and resources on tribal trust lands. The WPP will guide the Tribe in their efforts to conserve and restore wetland habitats that are of ecological importance to the surrounding environment and of cultural importance to tribal members.

The wetland program will provide a service not only to the Tribe, but also to federal, state and nonprofit agencies who are working within the Umpqua and Rogue River Basins on wetland issues. Please consider our historical accomplishments to date while evaluating this plan. Our Tribe appreciates the support from EPA in the development of our Wetland Program and we look forward to continuing to work with EPA on environmental issues.

Sincerely,

Amy Amoroso, Natural Resource Director
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

CC: Tracie-Lynn Nadeau, EPA Region 10 Oregon Operations Office
Kristine Carre, EPA Region 10 Oregon Operations Office

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

Wetland Program Plan

2014-2018



Prepared By:

The Natural Resource Department

Roseburg, Oregon

March 2014

Mission Statement: The mission of the Cow Creek Tribe's Natural Resource Department is to protect and enhance natural and cultural resources for current and future generations and to support Tribal members in connecting with these resources.

Introduction

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians (CCBUTI or the Tribe) consists of approximately 1600 members who primarily live within the Ancestral Territory that covers 6,266,894 acres (Map 1, pg 9). The Tribe recognizes that protection, conservation and enhancement of water resources are vital to all life forms as well as the wellbeing of Tribal members. Wetlands have provided many essential functions and values important to Tribal members for thousands of years. Historically the Tribe migrated seasonally to utilize various habitats, including wetlands, within the Umpqua Basin and Rogue Basin. In the spring, the Tribe would hunt deer, fish for salmon and lamprey, and gather camas, wild onion, and cat's ear bulbs in the wet meadows. During late summer and early fall, the Tribe would migrate to the uplands to gather huckleberries and blackcaps. The uplands also provided access to isolated lakes and swamps where cattails would be harvested along with waterfowl to prepare for the winter months to come. Other traditional foods that were gathered included tarweed seeds, hazel and chinquapin nuts, Indian lettuce, acorns, mushrooms and lamb quarters.

The Wetland Program Plan (WPP) will focus on surveying, inventorying and delineating of wetland habitats and resources on current lands in trust (4, 457 acres) and any additional lands that go into trust in the future. Currently the Tribe has hunting, gathering and fishing rights on federal lands within the Ancestral Territory so the Tribe will also focus the WPP on collaborating with these federal agencies on the management of wetland habitats and resources that could be utilized by the cultural department and tribal members for harvesting and gathering purposes.

Study Area

The Tribe's Ancestral Territory covers much of Southwest Oregon which is known to have a rich, diverse, and complex geologic history. The two main watersheds within the Ancestral Territory are the Umpqua River Basin and Rogue River Basin with all of the Tribal trust lands currently being located within the Umpqua River Basin of Douglas County. Tribal Trust Lands mainly consist of mixed coniferous forests and agricultural lands along perennial and intermediate streams. A majority of the wetland habitats on trust lands are located on the agricultural lands and are considered to be seasonal (Map 2, pg 10).

The Umpqua River Basin is approximately 5,100 square miles with two rivers, the North Umpqua (106 miles) and the South Umpqua (103 miles), joining in Roseburg to create the main stem Umpqua River (112 miles). The Umpqua drainage falls within three distinct Ecoregions: the Klamath Mountains, West Cascades and Pacific Northwest Coast. This is the largest watershed draining into the Oregon Coast south of the Columbia River and is important to the survival of spring chinook, fall chinook, winter steelhead, summer steelhead, Coho, sea run cutthroat trout, pacific lamprey and western brook lamprey. A local inventory of wetland habitats was conducted

in Winston Oregon in 2004 by Pacific Habitat Services (Tribe does own lands in the Winston area). The inventory identified 69.44 acres of wetlands with Palustrine emergent wetlands being the dominant type.

In addition to the Umpqua River Basin, the Rogue River Basin is 5156 square miles and drains all of or small portions of six counties in southwestern Oregon (Jackson, Josephine, Curry, Klamath, Douglas and Coos) as well as small portions of two counties in northwestern California (Siskiyou and Del Norte). The headwaters of the Rogue River start on the west side of Crater Lake which is the remnant of the Mt. Mazama volcano that erupted 7,000 years ago. There are four very different climate zones located within the Rogue River Basin: Pacific Maritime on the Coast, Oregon High Desert to the east, California Mediterranean to the south and Northern Temperate to the north. Many of the same aquatic species that are found in the Umpqua Basin are also found in the Rogue River Basin due to similar geology and hydrology. There have been three local inventories conducted in the Rogue River Basin for Medford, Grants Pass and Ashland.

Background

In 2006 the Tribe contracted with a local consulting firm to do a 6th field watershed assessment for Jordan/Alder Creek. The purpose of that assessment was to identify habitat restoration opportunities that would facilitate the return and sustainability of anadromous fish to Jordan and Alder Creek. The watershed assessment covered 2,459 acres of which the Tribe owned 22% of at that time. A wetlands section was included in the assessment using USFWS National Wetland Inventory Maps. It was determined that there was one “Palustrine” wetland in the watershed, but no data was collected on this wetland. It was stated there were likely other wetlands in the watershed but these potential wetlands are located off of tribal trust lands and there has been no additional wetland resources identified on tribal lands.

A Resource Utilization Study was conducted in 1983 by Stephen Beckham that revealed many areas traditionally used by the Tribe were wetland areas. Research from the Resource Utilization Study found that 20 of the 60 plants identified for gathering and harvesting at isolated swamps were determined to be wetland plants from the “USFWS National List of Plant Species that Occur in Wetlands: Oregon” list. This shows how valued wetlands were to tribal members and that a wetlands program plan needs to be created now to protect the plants and wildlife that our ancestors gathered and hunted for survival. This Wetland Program Plan will assist the Tribe to enhance wetland protection and management on tribally owned lands and to once again be a part of the management and sustainability of these cultural significant wetland areas that are home to a variety of plants and animals.

The Tribe has had a Natural Resource Department since 2004, but staff was very limited then. In 2011, an Environmental Specialist was hired to manage the Clean Water Act section 106 program and to expand the program into other areas. It was in 2012 that the department applied for the first Wetland Program Development Grant (WPDG) and was awarded funding to create a Wetland Program Plan. In 2013, the department applied for another WPDG with funding lasting 2 years for the development of a monitoring and assessment plan that will be implemented on tribal trust lands. In addition to the second WPDG awarded in 2013, the Tribe also received Clean Water Act section 319 funding to start that program also. In the fall of 2014, the Tribe will be hiring an additional full time staff who will work on the Wetlands Program and 319 programs. Other grants that the Department manages include those from USFWS, BIA, EPA (GAP), PCSRF, and Oregon Cultural Trust.

Project Goal Statement

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians will implement the Wetland Program Plan, over the next 5 years, to assess the condition of wetland resources on tribal trust lands and use this information in the future for the preservation and restoration of wetland habitats that are culturally and biologically important to the Tribe and the environment.

Objectives

1. Develop management, monitoring and assessment, and restoration priorities and objectives.
2. The Tribe will inventory, survey and delineate (where necessary) wetland habitats and resources on tribal trust lands.
3. Collaborate with other tribal departments (cultural, forestry, and business development), federal (BLM, USFWS and Forest Service) and state agencies (ODEQ and ODSL) and within the Ancestral Territory in the management and protection of wetland habitats and resources located on public lands.

Actions:

In working toward the overarching goals and objectives of CCBUTI's developing WPP the following activities are proposed based on a five year time frame:

- Evaluate wetlands identified in historical documents
- Compile existing data
- Identify unique and high quality wetlands for delineation
- Improve the wetlands knowledge base
- Complete a baseline wetland inventory and survey
- Protect and enhance culturally important wetland plants

- Establish protocol to track losses and gained wetlands
- Establish wetland monitoring program
- Identify priority restoration sites
- Identify funding needs and potential sources

Management Plan

The following plan reflects goals, objectives and actions planned for a five year time period on tribal trust lands. Work is broken into two core components: 1) Monitoring and Assessment and 2) Voluntary Restoration and Protection.

Monitoring and Assessment

Goal: To establish a monitoring and assessment program that facilitates sustainable management and conservation of wetlands.

Objective: Establish a baseline inventory of wetlands on tribal trust lands.

Action (a): Develop procedures for identifying CCBUTI wetlands					
Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Attend training at PSU for Basic Delineation of Wetland Habitats funded by WPDG (2012).	X				
Define data needs and uses for inventorying and surveying wetland habitats on tribal trust lands. Choose best method to use for wetland data collection.	X				
Create data sheets for inventorying and surveying wetlands on tribal trust lands. Determine a system for identifying productive wetlands that need delineation.	X				
Conduct inventory and survey of tribal trust lands.	X	X	X		
Draft and finalize MOU with the Forest Service and BLM for tribal members and tribal staff to access public lands for gathering and harvesting of culturally important plants.		X	X		

Develop educational materials with the Cultural Department Staff for tribal members and other tribal staff on the importance of wetlands not only to the environment, but also the historical significance to the Tribe.		X	X	X	X
Collaborate with the Oregon Department of State Lands and participate in the “Wetland Monitoring Workgroup” that is being established. Participate in the Tribal Wetland Interagency Group that has meetings/trainings twice a year. Work with the local Forest Service and BLM offices on the management of wetland habitats and resources on public lands and work with them on creating a wetland workgroup for the Umpqua and Rogue Basins.		X	X	X	X
Start mapping wetlands that have been identified and start building a database for the wetland program that other departments can use too.			X	X	X

Action (b): Develop and implement monitoring strategies of wetlands previously inventoried or surveyed to determine wetland health.					
Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Research and apply for additional funding to develop a monitoring and assessment plan.	X	X			
Develop a wetland monitoring and assessment plan that is funded by the WPDG.		X			
Draft and finalize a Quality Assurance Project Plan for monitoring of wetland habitats and resources.		X			
Determine a method for tracking sites that have been monitored for condition.		X			

Delineate wetlands of cultural or biological significance that need additional data collected. This will include the type of wetland and size; and identification of plants, insects and animals that are present.		X	X		
Examine ways to integrate the wetlands monitoring strategy into the 106 and 319 tribal programs.			X		
Work with the Cultural Department in sharing information gathered from the monitoring and assessments on plants or animals identified for cultural purposes.			X	X	X
Develop a report on the condition of the wetland habitats found on tribal trust lands.				X	X
Evaluate monitoring results for potential restoration and protection.				X	X

Voluntary Restoration and Protection

Goal: Maintain, improve, and increase healthy wetland ecosystems through conservation, protection and restoration.

Objective: Develop a restoration plan based on prioritization of wetland habitats and resources.

Action (a): Work in partnership with tribal departments, local state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations in the development of the restoration and protection plan					
Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Coordinate with natural resource agencies and partners to establish common goals for wetland protection and restoration efforts.			X	X	X
Draft and finalize voluntary restoration and protection plan for internal use on tribal trust lands.				X	X

Research and apply for additional funding to write the voluntary restoration and protection plan on tribal trust lands.			X	X	
Develop tribal policies for protecting wetland areas of cultural significance or ecological importance to the Tribe and the environment.					X
Identify and prioritize project sites for wetland restoration and rehabilitation based on ecological importance and watershed values consistent with the tribal restoration plan that will be developed within the above mentioned activities.					X

Evaluate Success of WPP

Goal: Evaluate the current WPP.

Objective: Develop a timeline of tasks to be completed over the next 3- 6 years.

Action (a): Develop a report on the Wetland Program for the Tribal Board and other departments.					
Activity	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Discuss the progress of the WPP with EPA and discuss the progression of the development of the tribal wetland program.			X		
Draft and finalize a report on the accomplishments of the wetland program to present to tribal board members and other department staff.					X
Begin brainstorming goals, objectives and actions to be completed for the next WPP.					X
Research and Apply for funding to update WPP.					X

Acknowledgements

Thank you to United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for providing a Wetland Program Development Grant to create this Wetland Program Plan. Special thanks is given to Oregon Operations EPA staff Tracie Nadeau for providing support, guidance and feedback to the staff on wetland program planning.

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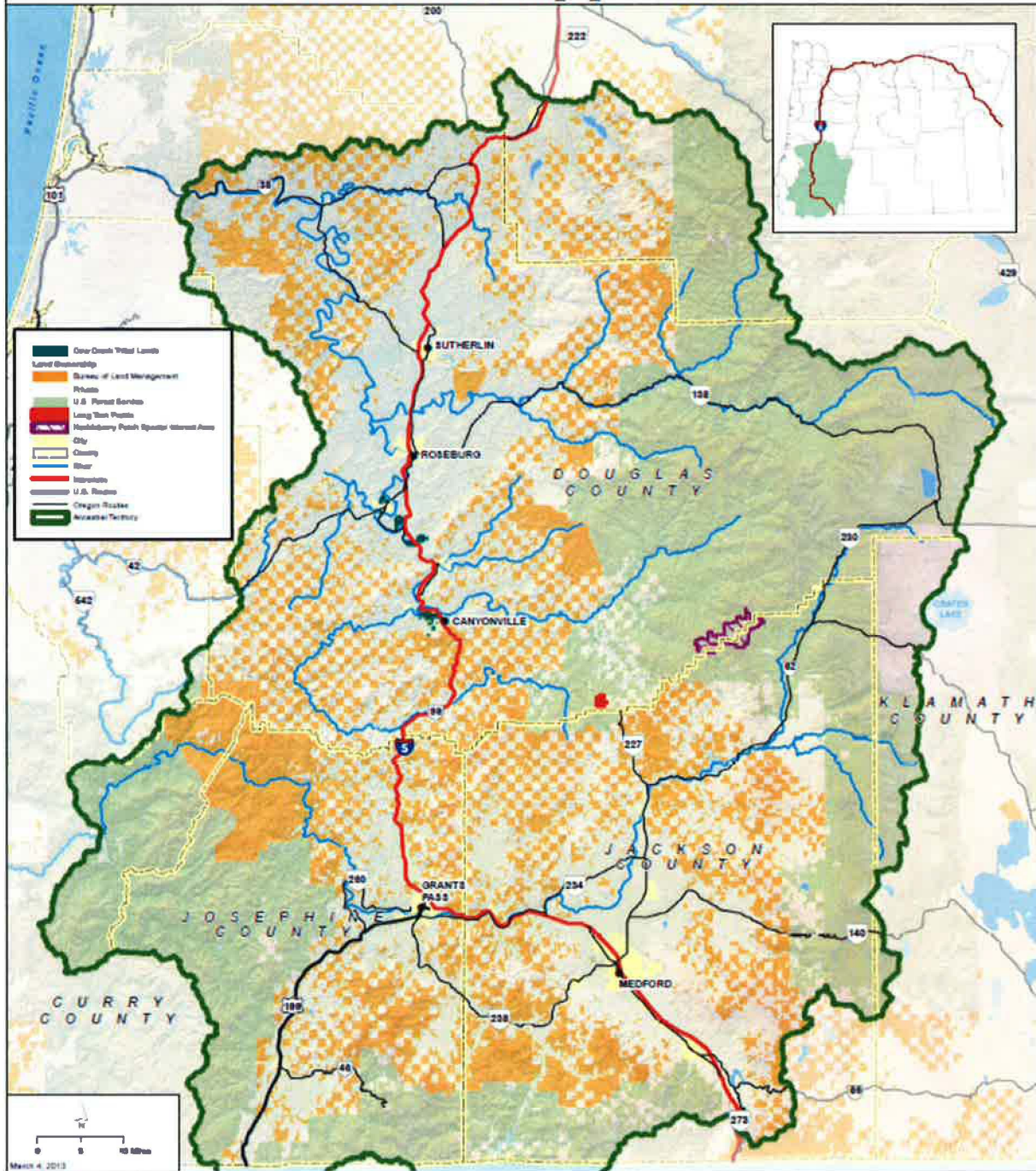
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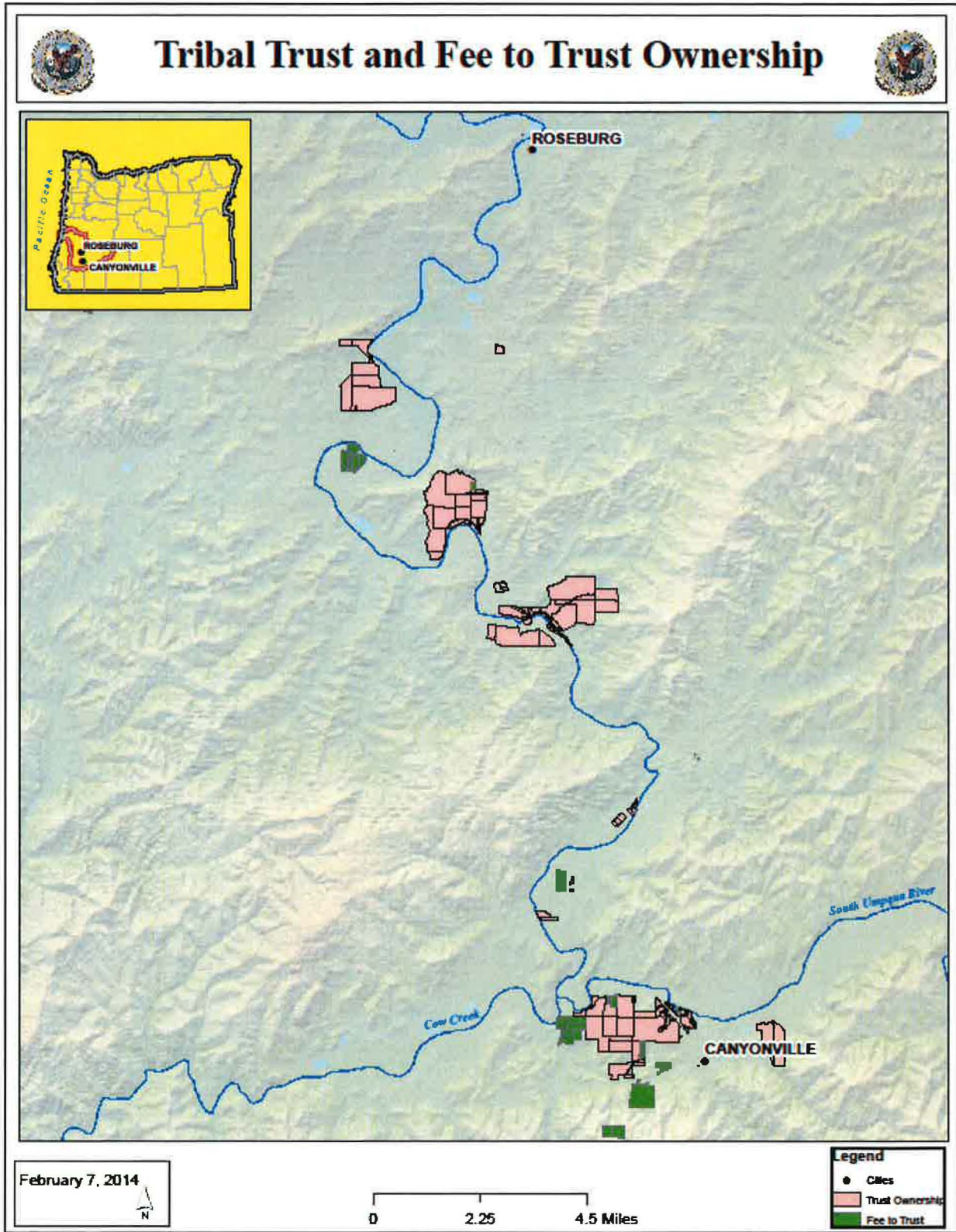
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Ancestral Territory Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe



Map 1: Ancestral Territory of the CCBUTI.



Map 2: Tribal Trust Ownership and Fee to Trust Ownership