

The O&C Act of 2014: Benefits to Oregon Tribes

The O&C Act of 2014 will chart a new course for 2.8 million acres of Bureau of Land Management lands in western Oregon, including O&C and Coos Bay Wagon Road lands, intent on ending decades of timber harvest and restoration uncertainty. Additionally, the O&C Act includes two important Tribal Land Conveyances that acknowledge the storied histories of two of Oregon's tribes: The Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians are the last remaining federally-recognized tribes in Oregon without a land base – their government-to-government relationships to the United States cut off during the federal government's since-failed "Termination" policy era of the 1950's. For a tribe to fully exercise its governmental powers – to protect and nurture its members, to retain its cultural and religious heritage, and to grow its economy – it needs a land base. Although the Cow Creek and Coos tribes were restored to federal recognition in the 1980's, they still have not been given back any of their former land from which they can exercise their inherent authority as sovereigns. The O&C Act would provide home bases for these tribes from which they can flourish.

The O&C Act would:

- **Place approximately 14,804 acres of federal land into trust for the benefit of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians.**
- **Place approximately 17,826 acres of federal land into trust for the benefit of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians.**

Federal "Self-Determination" policies have resulted in an economic boom all over Indian Country as tribes have used federal assistance to create jobs for Indians and non-Indians alike, much of the time in rural areas where economic opportunities would otherwise not exist. Many of the tribes in Oregon have been able to build their economies, become more self-sufficient and provide valuable goods and services, as well as jobs, to surrounding community members. Conveying these lands to Oregon's last un-landed federally-recognized tribes in the O&C Act will promote tribal self-sufficiency and cultural preservation, and will promote the economic development of neighboring communities.

Additionally, the O&C Act amends the Coquille Restoration Act to make forest management on tribal lands uniform with laws affecting the management of other tribal forests.