
Overview of the Cow Creek Tribal Board

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians is one of nine federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments in Oregon, and one of more than 550 federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments in the country. The Cow Creek Tribal Nation is governed by an elected 11-member council known as the Tribal Board of Directors and operates programs for the benefit of the membership of the Tribe. As a sovereign entity, the tribal government has governing power similar to that of the state level of government, as well as a governing constitution.

The Cow Creek Constitution states that it was adopted "... to form effective Tribal government, to secure and protect the powers inherent in our sovereign status and guaranteed to us by treaty and Federal law, to preserve our culture and Tribal identity, to promote the social and economic welfare of our people, to secure, protect, and develop our common resources, to maintain peace and order and safeguard individual rights, and to advance our mutual welfare."

Key Facts

- Eleven members serve four-year terms that are staggered (elections every year).
- Two meetings per month – one evening meeting and one all-day meeting
- The Tribal board consists of a chairman, vice chairman, treasurer, and secretary. These roles are chosen annually and are nominated by current board members.
- The chairman runs the meetings, is the face of the tribal board, and only votes when a tiebreaker is needed.
- The power of the tribal board comes from board members' election by tribal members.

Election Process

May

- Tribal members are nominated to be considered for the board.

May–June

- Tribal members can submit questions to the election committee.
- Three questions are selected and given to candidates.
- Candidates write a letter that is mailed out to tribal members in response to questions.

Overview of the Cow Creek Tribal Board *(Continued)*

July

- Ballots are mailed to all tribal members.

August

- Deadline for ballot submission.
- Ballots are sent to a certified public accountant (CPA).
- Election committee tallies the votes with the CPA. Any unverified names or ballots are removed from the results.
- Election results are presented at a General Council meeting.

Voting Information

- Tribal members 18 years old or older can vote.
- Voter turnout averages 40 percent. There are 550-plus voters (usually 250 to 300 ballots are submitted).
- The Tribe tries to avoid the “spectacle” of local elections, in part because we are not a contained community—people are spread out. The best way to communicate is through mail.
- “Campaigning” is a divisive issue. Some tribal members want it; some don’t. The main campaign product is the campaign letter.