

# COQUILLE INDIAN TRIBE

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*“Protecting Tribal lands, resources on these lands, and the Tribe’s aboriginal and cultural heritage; ensuring that Coquille lands are the best managed in the nation, in a sustainable, balanced manner that reflects the culture and economic priorities of the Coquille people”*

*-Mission of the Coquille Tribal Land, Resources and Environmental Services Program*

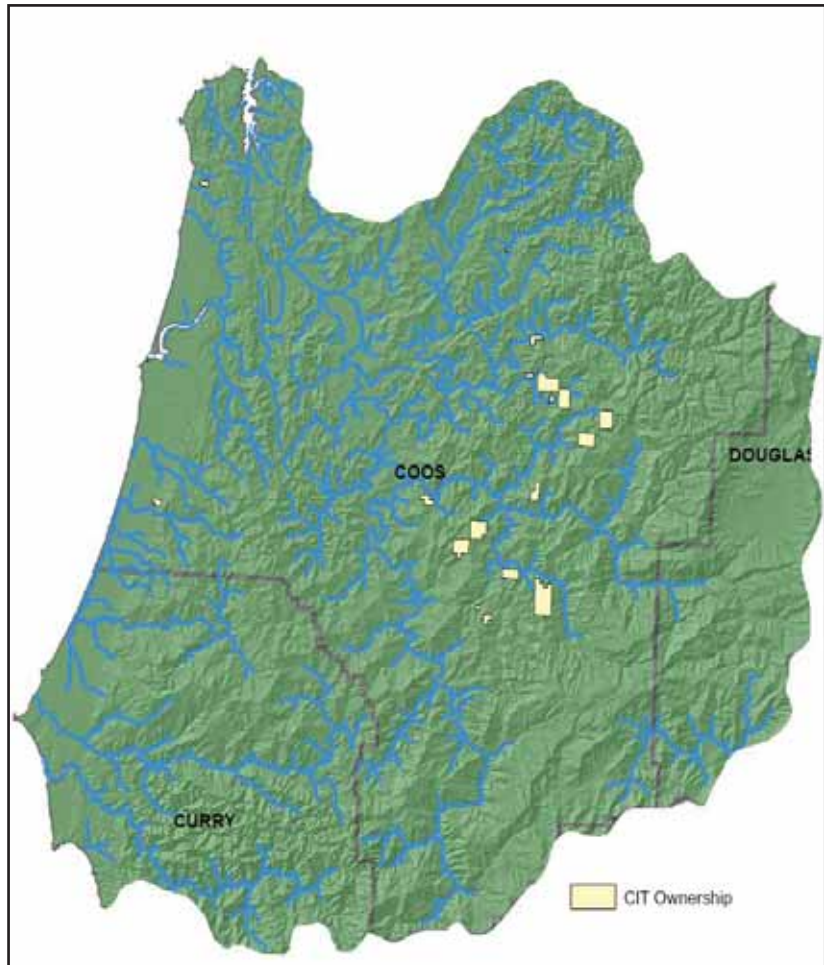


## Overview

The Culture and History of the Coquille People are inseparable from the forests, meadows and waterways of Southwestern Oregon. Since time immemorial, the Tribe has managed these resources to promote healthy ecosystems and communities. Through the violence, disease and injustices associated with colonization, the Tribe lost possession of nearly all of its ancestral homelands.

However, the Coquille Forest Act (P.L. 104-208, Division B, Title V), provides the modern Coquille Tribe with an opportunity to reaffirm Coquille stewardship over a small portion (5,410 acres) of its ancestral homelands, and to reestablish many of the tribal cultural traditions and customs that were once practiced on these landscapes.

Through local partnership efforts, the Tribe maintains an active interest in the preservation, restoration, and management of both public and private lands in the Coos and Coquille River basins, and within the extent of the Tribe's ancestral territory in Coos, Curry, and Douglas Counties and elsewhere.



# Tribal Forest Management

The Coquille Tribal Forest (Coquille Forest) is managed to maintain healthy, functioning ecosystems from which a sustainable production of natural resources can be used to promote Tribal self sufficiency and provide jobs and revenue to local economies. This ecosystem management strategy involves the use of ecological, economic, and social management principles to achieve healthy and sustainable natural systems. Because the Tribe will always be in this place, its forest ecosystems must forever remain healthy.



## *VISION FOR THE COQUILLE FOREST*

- *The forests represent a variety of age classes and canopy configurations with varying densities throughout the landscape.*
- *In areas less suitable for timber production, wetlands, open meadows, and mixed hardwood stands are predominate.*
- *Open areas (grasslands) consist of mostly native species that provide abundant wildlife forage.*
- *Streams run clear, and riparian/aquatic areas are productive, diverse, and function to store water and trap sediment.*
- *There is diversity and abundance of fish, wildlife, and vegetation. A mosaic of forest age classes provides for a variety viewsapes and experiences”.*

The Tribe uses many management tools to promote sustainability and enhance biodiversity.

- 80 Year Harvest Rotation
- Green Tree/Legacy Retention
- Down Woody /Log Retention
- Riparian Management Areas
- Cultural Species Management
- Noxious Weed Management
- Integrated Pest Management
- Pre-Commercial Thinning
- Commercial Thinning
- Sanitation Treatments
- Reforestation
- Biomass Utilization



**Above:** A 220-foot riparian buffer applied to an intermittent stream on Coquille Forest Lands. **Below (Left):** Coquille Tribal Youth learn the values of reforestation as they assist in annual tree planting efforts. **Below (Right):** An 80-year-old forest. Longer harvest rotations promote more structurally complex forests.





**Above: (Left)** Green trees are retained in the harvest unit to provide habitat for a variety of biota; promote legacy for future stands and to provide large wood to streams. **Above (Right)** Large woody debris and logs are left in the harvest unit to provide habitat for small mammals, amphibians, and other species.

**Below:** The Coquille Indian Tribe applies an interdisciplinary approach to forest management planning. The interdisciplinary team consists of members of the Forestry Program, Tribal Planning, Biological and Environmental Services Program, Education Program, Peacemaking Court Program, and the Cultural Services Program.



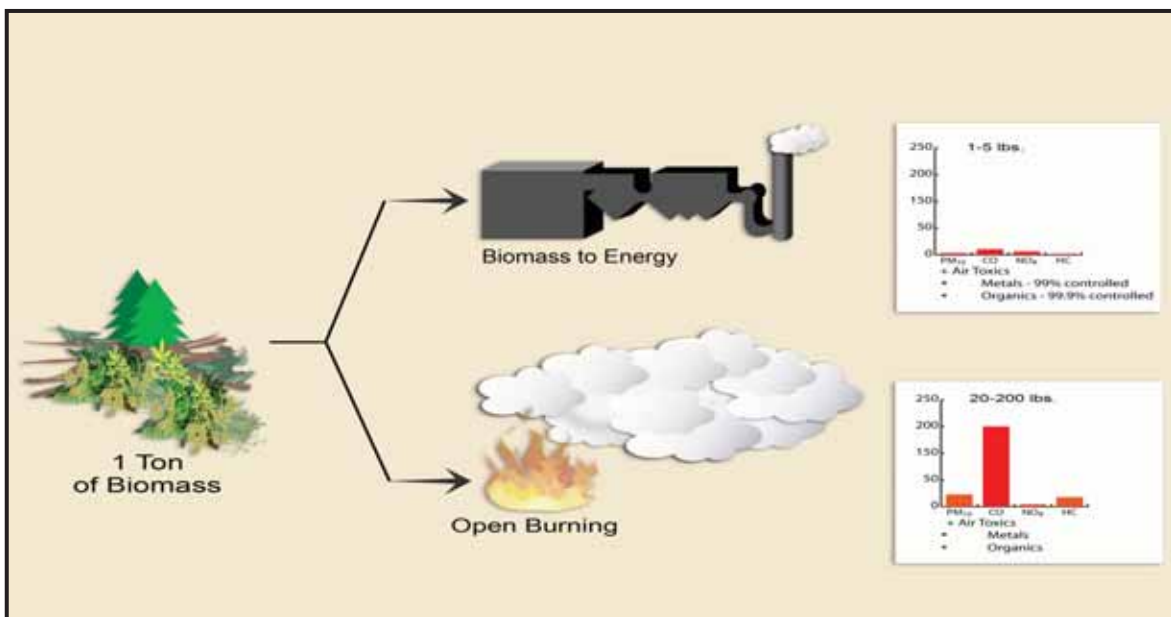
## Woody Biomass Utilization

Currently there are woody biomass fuels that are underutilized or disposed of as waste in Southwestern Oregon. A biomass facility using these fuels would create jobs, promote economic development, provide renewable energy, reduce wood waste destined for local landfills, and facilitate reduction of hazardous forest fuels and smoke emissions.

The Tribe is engaged in an intensive feasibility study assessing sustainable biomass utilization in the Coos Bay area.



**Above:** Woody slash and debris left over from harvest operations. These debris provide an excellent source of bio-fuel. **Below:** Diagram showing the difference in toxic air outputs between open air burning and a biomass facility.



## Restoring Water Quality, Promoting Fish Restoration, and Enhancing Wetlands

### Water Quality Monitoring

The Tribe conducts voluntary water quality monitoring on *all* forest streams during ground disturbing activities. Streams are monitored to detect any change in turbidity, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and conductivity.

The Tribe's goal is to ensure that management activities on tribal forest lands are carried out in an ecologically sensitive manner with no negative effects on water quality or fish populations.

### Fish Restoration

Restoring the native fish populations of the subbasin is a complex endeavor that requires a blend of applied science, local involvement, and adaptive management.

The Tribe authored the Coquille River Subbasin Plan; a critical planning tool to conserve Coho Salmon and other native fish species within the Coquille River Subbasin. The Tribe has recently partnered with the Coquille Watershed, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement board, to create a committee that helps facilitate the implementation of the Subbasin Plan.

The Tribe participated in many aquatic habitat restoration activities including culvert replacement, road decommissioning, and riparian planting.

### Wetland Restoration

The Tribe's wetland program assesses and restores the historic functionality of wetlands on Tribal forest lands. Restoring wetlands increases biodiversity, including fish, wildlife and culturally significant plant species.



**Above:** CIT Environmental staff installing water temperature instruments.



## Restoring Meadow Habitats

Meadow habitats are slowly disappearing as a result of encroachment by invasive and exotic species.

These habitats are very important in preserving and maintaining biodiversity. Since time immemorial, meadows have provided important resources to the Coquille People.

The Tribe actively participates in meadow conservation, preservation, and restoration. In the near future, the Tribe will spearhead a cooperative effort with adjacent landowners and other stakeholders to promote a wider interest in ridge top and open meadow habitats.



## About The Coquille Indian Tribe

The Coquille Indian Tribe (CIT or Tribe), with 875 enrolled tribal members, is located in Coos Bay/North Bend, Oregon, on the southwestern Oregon coast. The Tribe was displaced by the federal government and dispossessed of their lands under adverse assimilation and termination policies in the 1950s. A dedicated effort by the Tribe resulted in the restoration of their Federal tribal status under the Coquille Restoration Act (Act), which was passed by the United States Congress in 1989. The restoration of tribal governmental powers included full eligibility for federal benefits and services (as with other tribes) for a five-county service area including Coos, Curry, Lane, Douglas and Jackson counties. Provisions under the Act supported the Tribe in establishing a governmental infrastructure and acquiring a land base.

The Tribe has a constitution approved by the Secretary of the Interior that provides for executive, legislative and judicial functions. An elected, seven-member Tribal Council governs the Tribe and provides: tribal member education, health, human, community development, economic, land resource management, law enforcement, and judicial services.

Approximately 1,100 acres of land in the Coos Bay/North Bend area were placed in trust for the Tribe by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), including the Empire Reservation (Reservation) and 5,400 acres of forest land (Coquille Forest) transferred from the Bureau of Land Management in 1998.

With acquisition of land and its resources, the Tribe is inclined to conduct land use planning and has determined that environmental and cultural resource management will be an integral aspect of the Tribe's and the surrounding communities growth and development.



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