



# California Tribal Court Descriptions

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
OF THE COURTS

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## **Bishop Paiute Indian Tribal Court**

**The Bishop Paiute Tribe** is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 875 acres of land located in Inyo County California. The tribe has approximately 2,000 members.

**Date Court Established:** 2003

**Background:** The court was established by Bishop Paiute Tribal Ordinance No. 2003-03. In 2009, the tribe hired a tribal court judge and a tribal court clerk. The Bishop Paiute Indian Tribal Court heard its first case in April 21, 2009.

### **Court Cases: Civil**

- Adult guardianship
- Employee records
- Environmental protection,
- Child support orders
- Illegal fireworks
- Name change and verification
- Nuisance
- Public safety (restraining orders)
- Rental minimal housing standards
- Tribal small claims
- Tribal mortgage lending and unlawful detainer
- Truancy
- Vicious dog

**Chief Judge:** Hon. William Kockenmeister.

**Court Administrator:** Joyce Alvey

760-873-3584

[joyce.alvey@bishoppaiute.org](mailto:joyce.alvey@bishoppaiute.org)

**Court Address:** 50 Tu Su Lane, Bishop, California 93514

**Court Website:** <http://www.bishoppaiutetribe.com/tribal-court.html>

## **BLUE LAKE RANCHERIA TRIBAL COURT**

The Blue Lake Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 76 acres of land located in Humboldt County California.

The tribal ordinance establishing the current Blue Lake Rancheria Tribal Court was enacted in January of 2008, and the court began taking cases that month. The ordinance provides the court with jurisdiction over civil and criminal matters arising within the tribe's reservation as expressly provided in tribal ordinances.

The Court has adopted Rules of Pleading, Practice and Procedure; Rules of Evidence; Rules Governing the Conduct of Judges; Rules Governing the Conduct of the Tribal Court Clerk and Rules Governing the Admission of Attorneys to Practice Before the Court. Copies of the Court's Rules can be obtained from the Tribal Court Clerk.

The court currently has several cases pending, all of them contract disputes. The Tribal Council has under consideration expanding the types of cases that the Court can hear. The Chief Judge of the court is Judge Lester J. Marston. The Court's Associate Judge is Jay Shapiro.

The Tribal Court is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Court maintains a drop box for the filing of pleadings 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Clerk of the Court:  
707-668-5101  
707-668-4272 (fax)  
E-mail: [courtclerk@bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov](mailto:courtclerk@bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov)

Mailing address:  
P.O. Box 426  
Blue Lake, California 95525  
24-hour drop box:  
Blue Lake Rancheria Tribal Office  
428 Chartin Road  
Blue Lake, California 95525

Tribal Court website: <http://www.bluelakerancheriansn.gov/govLawTribalCourt.html>

Tribal website: <http://www.bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov>

## CHEMEHUEVI INDIAN TRIBAL COURT

Chemehuevi is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 700 enrolled members, roughly 300 of whom live on the reservation. The Tribe's reservation consists of approximately 30,653 acres located on the shores of Lake Havasu in southeastern California in San Bernardino County on the Arizona border.

The Chemehuevi Indian Tribal Court was first established as a "magistrate court" in the mid-1980s to hear cases stemming from violations of the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe's Conservation Code, which governs the preservation and conservation of the Tribe's/Chemehuevi Indian Reservation's natural resources. In 1996, the tribe enacted an ordinance establishing the Chemehuevi Indian Tribal Court, a court of limited jurisdiction; however, the court did not become active until the latter part of 1996. The court exercises jurisdiction over specific subject matter areas determined by the tribal council. Currently the court hears cases involving name changes, birth certificate changes, dissolution of marriages, unlawful detainer, contract disputes, trespass, animal control, torts, domestic violence, guardianships, and juvenile matters including Indian Child Welfare Act cases.

The Chief Judge of the Tribal Court is Judge Robert Moeller.

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 1930

Havasu Lake, California 92363

Location:

1990 Palo Verde Drive

Havasu Lake, California 92363

760-858-4219, ext. 30

760-858-5120 (fax)

E-mail: [citcourt@yahoo.com](mailto:citcourt@yahoo.com)

<http://www.chemehuevi.net/govcourt.php>

## **Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) Tribal Court**

Chief Judge: not available.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes are a federally recognized tribe with almost 270,000 acres of reservation land along both sides of the Colorado River between Parker, Arizona and Blyth California. The tribe has over 3,500 enrolled members.

The CRIT Tribal Court was originally established in 1937 by Act of June 18, 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act. The court has evolved over time and its jurisdiction expanded in 1975. Currently the court hears a variety of case types, including criminal offenses, child welfare and domestic relations, traffic, and game fish and wildlife management.

26600 Mohave Road  
Parker, Arizona 85344

928-669-1355  
928-669-8223 (fax)

<http://www.crit-nsn.gov/critcourt/>

Laws and ordinances; [http://www.crit-nsn.gov/crit\\_contents/ordinances](http://www.crit-nsn.gov/crit_contents/ordinances)

## **Fort Mojave Tribal Court**

The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 41,000 acres of land in California, Nevada and Arizona. The tribe has over 1,000 members.

Chief Judge – unknown

Fort Mojave Tribal Court  
8492 South Highway 95  
Mohave Valley, Arizona 86440

928-346-5293  
928-346-5287 (fax)

## **HOOPA VALLEY TRIBAL COURT**

The Hoopa Valley tribe is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 2,000 enrolled members. The Hoopa valley Reservation is located in northeast Humboldt County along the Trinity River. It contains approximately 89,400 acres, the largest reservation in California.

The tribal court was first established in 1974. Originally the court heard only fishing cases. The court currently has jurisdiction to hear cases arising under the Hoopa Valley Tribal Constitution or statute. The tribe currently has over 67 statutes on a variety of subject matters. The court hears cases involving family law, child abuse and neglect, evictions, domestic violence restraining orders, juvenile delinquency, juvenile wellness court, traffic citations, and civil complaints for monetary damages.

Chief Judge – Hon. Richard Blake.

P.O. Box 1389  
Hoopa, California 95546  
530-625-4305  
530-625-4307 (fax)

<http://www.hoopa-nsn.gov/departments/tribalcourt/tribalcourt.htm>

## **Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Tribal Court**

The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians is a federally recognized tribe located in Mendocino County. The tribe has about 700 enrolled members, 50 of whom live on the tribe's reservation. The tribe's land base consists of close to 400 acres located about 13 miles south of Ukiah.

The Hopland Tribal Court was established by Ordinance 01-07-10 on July 10, 2001. In this ordinance, the Hopland Tribal Council found and declared the following in section 1: Public Law 280, 28 U.S.C. § 1360, did not divest the tribe of its inherent sovereign authority to establish and operate its own judicial system. The courts of the state of California lack jurisdiction over many civil disputes and criminal acts that occur on the tribe's reservation. The establishment of a tribal court that can exercise jurisdiction over civil disputes and criminal acts occurring on the tribe's reservation, particularly those disputes and acts that the courts of the state of California lack jurisdiction over, is necessary to maintain peace and order on the Hopland Indian Reservation. The adoption of this ordinance promotes the health and safety of the members of the tribe, is in the best interests of the members of the tribe, and furthers the administration of justice on the reservation.

In the following years additional ordinances were established which grant the tribal court jurisdiction over specific matters, such as small claims, name changes, etc. The court received a grant of start-up funding from the Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Tribal Courts Assistance Program in 2003. In 2004, while court planning was under way, a conflict in the tribe's Constitution halted all court plans, development, and opening until a vote of the general membership could amend the constitution. In September of 2006, following a vote of the tribe's general membership, the tribe hired a court clerk and contracted with a Chief Judge.

Chief Judge: Christine Williams

Hopland Tribal Court  
P.O. Box 533  
Hopland, California 95449

707-744-1647  
707-744-8641 (fax)

[http://www.hoplandtribe.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=53](http://www.hoplandtribe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=53)

## Intertribal Court of Southern California

**Twelve Tribes in San Diego County** are served by the Intertribal Court of Southern California (ICSC). They are **Jamul Indian Village, La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla and Cupeno Indians, Manzanita Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Mesa Grande Band of Mission Indians, Pauma Band of Mission Indians, Rincon Band of Luiseno Indians, San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, Iipaay Nation of Santa Ysabel, Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians**. San Diego County has more Indian reservations than any other county in the United States. However, the reservations are very small, with total land holdings of just over 124,000 acres, or about 193 square miles of the 4,205 square miles in San Diego County. Some of the reservations are very remote. Others are close to metropolitan areas.

**Date Court Established:** 2002

**Background:** The abovementioned tribes established the court by entering into an [Intertribal Governing Agreement](#) (IGA). By signing the IGA and passing a tribal resolution, tribes utilize the court and its related services. Under the IGA, participating tribes appoint members to serve on the Tribal Judicial Council, which governs the court. Each tribe served by the court has its own laws, codes, and ordinances.

The overall purpose of ICSC is to provide members of participating tribes with a culturally sensitive judicial forum in which to present and resolve disputes. The ICSC is an intertribal court system that works on a "circuit type" basis, where tribal judges travel from one reservation to the next presiding over cases based on specific tribes' laws, ordinances, customs, and history. The ICSC is an "independent judiciary." Its purpose is to preserve the integrity, autonomy and sovereignty, of the Native American communities it serves in a culturally sensitive and traditionally aware environment.

### **Court Cases: Civil**

The court's jurisdiction depends on the member tribe's government codes, laws and rules and to what extent that government has granted jurisdiction to the court.

- Contracts
- Conservatorships
- Environmental protection
- Family law
- Evictions
- Exclusions
- Peace and security code violations
- Tort claims

**Chief Judge:** Hon. Devon Lomayesva

**Court Administrator:** Rachel Geisler

760-751-4142

rroberts@sciljc.org

**Court Address:** 49002 Golsh Road, Rincon Indian Reservation, Valley Center, California 92082

The Court also holds hearings on Tribal Reservation Lands. The Judge will travel a “circuit”, usually once a month, to these member Nations Reservations.

**Court Website:** <http://www.sciljc.org/>

## **Karuk Tribal Court**

**The Karuk Tribe** is a federally recognized tribe located in northern California with lands in Humboldt and Siskiyou counties. The tribal community has four primary locations: Happy Camp, Orleans, Somes Bar and Yreka. The tribe has approximately 800 acres of reserve land and over 3,500 enrolled members.

**Date Court Established:** 2004

**Background:** The court was established by Karuk Tribal Ordinance No.2004-10. The tribe's codes and court's rules can be found here: <http://karuk.us/index.php/departments/judicial-system>. The tribe operates a tribal self-help center.

### **Court Cases: Civil**

- Child custody and youth in need of care (equivalent to state court Welfare and Institutions Code section 300 and section 600 cases)
- Guardianships
- Housing disputes
- Juvenile wellness
- Name changes
- Protection orders
- Stepparent adoptions

**Chief Judge:** Hon. April Attebury

**Judge Pro Tem:** Hon. Michelle Krieger and Hon. Stephanie Dolan

**Court Administrator:** April Attebury

530-842-9228

aattebury@karuk.us

**Court Address:** 1836 Apsuun, P.O. Box 629, Yreka, California 96097

**Court Website:** <http://www.karuk.us/karuk2/departments/tribal-court>

## **Morongo Tribal Court**

**The Morongo Band of Mission Indians** is a federally recognized tribe located adjacent to the City of Banning within Riverside County, California. The tribe has approximately 750 enrolled members and the land base consists of close to 32,000 acres located about 20 miles west of Palm Springs.

**Date Court Established:** 2007

**Background:** The court was established by Morongo Band of Mission Indians Tribal Ordinance. The court hears matters as authorized by tribal codes and ordinances. The court is currently developing codes to authorize jurisdiction over tort claims and misdemeanors.

### **Court Cases: Civil**

- Adoptions
- Child protection
- Disabled adult conservatorships
- Guardianships
- Off road vehicles

**Chief Judge:** Hon. Michael Golden

**Court Administrator:** Vivian Vasquez

951-572-6068

vvasquez@morango-nsn.gov

**Court Address:** 12700 Pumarra Road, Banning, California 92220

**Court Website:** <http://www.morongonation.org/content/tribal-court>

## **Quechan Tribal Court**

**The Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Reservation** is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 44,000 acres of land located on the lower Colorado River in Imperial County, California and Yuma County, Arizona, just north of the Mexican border. The Reservation lands lie along both sides of the Colorado River. The tribe's main office is located in Fort Yuma, Arizona, however its operations and the majority of its reservation land are located in California. The tribe has about 4,000 enrolled members.

**Date Court Established:** 1996

**Background:** The court's mission statement is-  
Establish justice; insure tranquility; promote general welfare; safeguard interest; and secure blessings of freedom and liberty for the Quechan Indian Tribe and for its posterity. Together We Progress!

### **Court Cases: Civil and Criminal**

A comprehensive juvenile code has been developed and is pending approval by the Quechan Tribal Council.

**Chief Judge:** Hon. Claudette C. White  
Pro Tem Judge: Hon. Veronica A. Henderson

**Court Administrator:** Barrie Tibbitts

760-572-5552

[tribal.court@quechantribe.com](mailto:tribal.court@quechantribe.com)

**Court Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 1899, Yuma, Arizona 85366

**Court's Physical Location:** 450 Quechan Drive, Winterhaven, CA 92283

## **Redding Rancheria Tribal Court**

The Redding Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe with a reservation of approximately 15 acres located in the City of Redding in Shasta County. The tribe has close to 300 enrolled members.

The tribal court was established by tribal ordinance enacted in November of 2005 and began hearing cases in May of 2006. The court is a court of limited jurisdiction hearing matters as authorized in specific tribal codes and ordinances. Currently the court hears child dependency cases that arise under the tribe's Children's Code. The court also hears some appeals arising under several other tribal ordinances.

Chief Judge: Hon. Richard Blake

Redding Rancheria Tribal Court  
2000 Redding Rancheria Road  
Redding, California 96001  
530-225-8979  
530-241-1879 (fax)

## **San Manuel Tribal Court**

The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians is a federally recognized tribe with just over 800 acres of reservation lands located in San Bernardino County California. The tribe has approximately 200 members.

The San Manuel Tribal Court was established under the San Manuel Judicial Code in 2003. After several years of development, the court opened on October 23, 2009. The court exercises general civil jurisdiction over tribal citizens and persons who have consented to tribal jurisdiction, either expressly or implicitly by entering the San Manuel Reservation or engaging in contractual relations with the tribe. The tribal court does not hear gaming-related disputes, which are handled in accordance with the tribal-state compact.

The San Manuel Tribal Court consists of the trial court and the appellate court. The trial court's Chief Judge acts as the chief administrator of both the trial court and the appellate court.

The Chief Judge and appellate judges are appointed by the General Council, in consultation with the Judiciary Committee. Pro tempore judges (*temporary judges*) are appointed by the Business Committee, in consultation with the Judiciary Committee and the Chief Judge.

Acting Chief Judge: Anthony Lee.

**San Manuel Tribal Court**  
San Manuel Indian Reservation  
3214 Victoria Avenue  
Highland, California 92346  
909-907-6920  
909-425-1894

<http://www.sanmanuel-nsn.gov/court.php.html>

## **Shingle Springs Rancheria Tribal Court**

The Shingle Springs Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 160 acres of reservation land in El Dorado County. The tribe has just over 300 enrolled members.

The Shingle Springs Rancheria Tribal Court was established in November of 2010. The Court aims to further the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians' tribal sovereignty and tribal government while providing the community a culturally sensitive and equitable process for settling legal matters. Currently, the Tribal Court has a trial court for civil matters that can include; enrollment, elections, assignments or land laws, environmental laws, housing laws, building codes, children's codes, peace and security codes and other civil laws passed by the Tribal Council. The Tribal Court does not hear criminal cases at this time.

Chief Judge: Cynthia Gomez

Mailing Address:

PO Box 1340

Shingle Springs, CA 95682

Physical Address:

5281 Honpie Road

Placerville, CA 95667

Main Phone Number: (530) 698-1400

Main Fax Number: (530) 676-8033

## **Smith River Rancheria Tribal Court**

The Smith River Rancheria is a federally recognized tribe located in the north-western corner of California. The tribe has approximately 100 acres of land in total. Thirty acres of land in Del Norte County are held by the tribe. However, the federally recognized service area of the Tribe includes Humboldt and Del Norte Counties in Northern California and Coos, Curry and Josephine counties in southwestern Oregon.

The Smith River Rancheria tribal court was established by Tribal Ordinance 06-10 in April of 2006. The court currently hears primarily family law related cases including child welfare, guardianships, protective orders, dissolutions and child support. The Court also hears name change matters.

Presiding Judge: Hon. Richard Blake

Clerk of the Court: Devon White

devon.white@tolowa.com

Telephone 707.487.9255 extension 3223

Smith River Rancheria Tribal Court

P.O. Box 992

Smith River, California 95567

707-487-6424

888-468-8221 (fax)

<http://www.tolowa-nsn.gov/TribalGovernment/TribalJudicialSystem.aspx>

## **Washoe Tribal Court**

The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California has close to 3,500 acres of land located in western Nevada and eastern California. It consists of at least ten geographically distinct tracts of land. The Washoe communities include the Woodfords Indian Community located in Alpine County California. The Washoe tribe is the only tribe in California which currently exercises exclusive jurisdiction over child-welfare matters involving the tribe's children residing on the tribe's reservation lands.

The Washoe tribal court was established in 1978. Originally it dealt with criminal matters, some civil and juvenile cases, and traffic matters. Jurisdiction was later broadened to include probate matters.

The tribal court adjudicates all civil, criminal, juvenile, and probate cases that occur on Washoe tribal lands or fall within Washoe Tribe's jurisdiction. The tribal court's jurisdiction is limited based on the following criteria:

Territorial Jurisdiction extends to all tribally held lands as defined in the tribe's Constitution, including trust and non-trust lands and all roads, water, and bridges, and to any lands that may in the future become subject to the jurisdiction of the tribe by virtue of an executive order, a declaration, or regulation of the U.S. Department of the Interior, a declaration or order of a court of competent jurisdiction, or other lawful means.

The tribal court has subject matter jurisdiction over all civil causes of action pursuant to title 2, Civil Procedure, of the Washoe Tribe Law and Order Code.

To the extent permitted by federal law, the tribal court has criminal jurisdiction over all offenses enumerated in the Washoe Tribe Law and Order Code, title 5, and any subsequent ordinance adopted by the tribe when committed within the jurisdiction of the court by an Indian or non-Indian.

To the extent permitted by federal law, the tribal court has original jurisdiction in all proceedings and matters affecting Indian and non-Indian children under the age of 18 years who are residing or are apprehended within the jurisdiction of the court.

Chief Judge: William Kockenmeister

Washoe Tribal Court  
919 U.S. Highway 395 South  
Gardnerville, Nevada 89410

800-265-5293

<http://www.washoetribe.us/administration/programsdepartments/judicial.html>

## **Yurok Tribal Court**

**The Yurok Tribe** is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 63,035 acres of ancestral land, which extends from one mile on each side from the mouth of the Klamath River and upriver for a distance of 44 miles. The reservation is located in Humboldt County and Del Norte County, California. The tribe has approximately 6,000 members

**Date Court Established:** 1974

**Background:** The court was initially established by the U.S. Federal government in response to requests from various agencies and enactment of the Magnuson Act by Congress. The court operated under the Code of Federal Regulations (25 CFR Part 11) on the Hoopa Indian Reservation to regulate Indian fishing on the Trinity and Klamath Rivers. In 1978, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) established another branch of this court in Klamath, California to regulate Indian fishing on the Klamath River. This court reviewed fishing cases forwarded from the BIA law enforcement officers monitoring Indian fishing activity on the Klamath and Trinity Rivers until the year 1993. The Yurok Tribe, after formal organization under the Yurok Constitution, took over the CFR contract and the disposition of the court's fishing cases until the adoption of the Yurok Tribe Judicial Branch Ordinance in 1996 and the institution of the Tribe Fishing Ordinance in 1996. At that time, measures were taken to cease operation of the CFR court and transfer jurisdiction to the Yurok Tribe under its Constitution and ordinances.

Since 1996, the tribe has enacted ordinances and codes that govern their reservation, residents, tribal members, tribal lands, ancestral territory and those who do business with the tribe or on the reservation. A list of the current and pending codes can be found on the tribe's website.

The Yurok Tribal Court has been developed as an effective tribal justice system encompassing both traditional principles as well as contemporary jurisprudence for the Yurok People.

### **Court Cases: Civil**

- Child support
- Civil citations (ordinance violations)
- Civil complaints
- Construction planning
- Custody
- Divorce
- Kinship guardianships
- Probate
- Sex offenders
- Wellness court

**Chief Judge:** Hon. Abby Abinanti

**Court Administrator:** Jennifer Burgess

707-482-1350

[jburgess@yuroktribe.nsn.us](mailto:jburgess@yuroktribe.nsn.us)

**Court Address:** P.O. Box 1027, Klamath, CA 95548

**Court Location:** 230 Klamath Boulevard, Klamath CA 95548

**Court Website:** <http://www.yuroktribe.org/tribalcourt/>

# CALIFORNIA

## Tribal & Federal Lands

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|---|---|
|  BIA (Tribal) |  FS  |
|  BLM          |  FWS |
|  BOR          |  NPS |
|  Private Land |  DOD |

