



United States Senate
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining

Hearing on Misc. Public Lands Bills

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Written Testimony
of
Michael Rondeau, CEO
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians

Wik'uuyà'mhan. Michael Rondeau eyít^he. Yaakalà's eyít^he. K'uùyapatam eepík^h.

Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide comments today on S.1415, the Canyon Mountain Land Conveyance Act of 2013.

The Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe is grateful to have the opportunity to testify before the Committee regarding the restoration to the Tribe of certain forest parcels within our ancestral homeland.

Thank you.

In addition to this Committee as a body, the Tribe would also like to especially thank Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, and Representative Peter DeFazio, for sponsoring our reservation legislation in their respective chambers of Congress.

The basic story of our bill is simple. Our Tribe ceded over 800 square miles of our Southern Oregon homeland to the federal government in a treaty ratified by the US Senate in 1854. The Cow Creek Treaty contained a reservation lands provision, but this obligation was never fulfilled by the federal government.

In spite of all odds and difficulties, our ancestors held our tribe together and met regularly as a tribal government, believing that one day justice would prevail and the dream of a reservation for our people would become reality.

Subsequent to our Tribe being legislatively restored to federal recognition in 1982, our Tribe has focused on providing governmental services and developing programs while working to develop a diverse economy from a limited land base in a rural natural resource area.

While our Tribe is grateful for our federal restoration, it did not address the reservation lands provision of our Treaty and today, although our Tribe has been able to purchase some limited acreage for housing, governmental services and economic development, we are one of the only tribes in the US with a ratified treaty providing for a reservation, with no reservation yet established.

Our reservation lands bill will not only rectify a material omission in the treaty relationship between the Cow Creek Umpqua and the federal government, it will also allow our Tribe to continue on our well established path of self-sufficiency, regional economic development and environmental stewardship.

For our people to have a place of their own Tribe to gather, to fish, to hunt and camp and meet and make a meaningful living, is the culmination of a dream seven generations old, and - should we be fortunate enough to have Congress complete the process of honoring our treaty reservation - we are committed to making those lands beneficial for the next seven generations of our Tribe, as well as part of a favorable tide for our entire community.

When we look at the map of our proposed reservation lands, located just miles from where our treaty was signed, and in the same area as our sacred cultural gathering place, South Umpqua Falls, and see our Tribal names reflected in the very landscape through features such as Rondeau Butte and Dompier Creek, we know in our hearts that the reservation bill is right, and the time is now.

Today I was able to greet you in our language, Takelma, because the efforts of my ancestors and your predecessors in Congress have given us the ability and hope to begin to speak our ancient words. It is my wish that the fruits of our reservation lands efforts today will pave the way for my descendants to make the whole speech in Takelma, as proud Americans addressing those that follow in your footsteps in these halls of Congress.

Again, thank you for allowing me to testify before you.