

California Valley Miwok Tribe

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The **California Valley Miwok Tribe** also known as **Sheep Rancheria of Me-wuk Indians** is a Federally Recognized Tribe, established in 1915 - see the United States Federal Register: <http://www.californiavalleymiwok.com/2014-01-29-Federal-Register-Vol-79-19.pdf> , page 4749. The Tribe's territorial path is from Calaveras County in the Sierra Mountains down to Northern San Joaquin Valley and into Alameda County.

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Government

Due to a long-standing leadership dispute, there is no Federally Recognized Authority for this tribe. See, Bureau of Indian Affairs - Tribal Directory 2014 <http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OIS/TribalGovernmentServices/TribalDirectory> page 63 of 93).

The dispute is between the Hereditary Members (totaling some 220 adults and 300+ children) and the Burley Family (some 5 persons: Silvia Burley, her 2 daughters, and 1 granddaughter, and Burley's non-Indian husband who is sometimes identified as a member).

Respectively, there are two different websites:

- The Hereditary Members - <http://www.californiavalleymiwok.com/>
- The Burley Family - <http://www.californiavalleymiwoktribe-nsn.gov>

History

On December 13, 2013, Judge Barbara Jacobs Rothstein of United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued the "ORDER REGARDING CROSS MOTIONS FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT" in which the Hereditary Members were the Plaintiff, the Bureau of Indian Affairs the Defendent, and the Burley Family the Intervenor. This Order represents the present legal status of the Tribe. See <http://www.californiavalleymiwok.com/2013-12-13-Documnet-88.PDF> .

The Judge ruled as follows:

"... this Court concludes that the Assistant Secretary [Bureau of Indian Affairs] erred when he assumed that the Tribe's membership is limited to five individuals [the Burley family and Yakima Dixie] and further assumed that the Tribe is governed by a duly constituted tribal council, thereby ignoring multiple administrative and court decisions that express concern about the nature of the Tribe's governance. Therefore, the Court will grant Plaintiffs' [Hereditary Members] motion for summary judgment in so far as it seeks remand of the August 2011 Decision and deny the Federal Defendants' [The BIA] cross motion for summary judgment." (page 2.)

The Court noted the illegal contact by "... Wilson Pipestem, a lobbyist based out of Washington, D.C. and acting on behalf of Burley....". (Page 12.)

The Court found the Assistant Secretary - BIA, Larry Echo Hawk, to have violated 5 U.S.C. § 706(2)(A) finding him "to be ... arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law.". (page 14)

The Court concludes: "This matter is remanded to the Secretary for reconsideration consistent with the terms of this order....". (page 23)

This Court Order is presently binding on the BIA; and it gives a good historical summary of the Tribe and the current disputed leadership.

See also

- Miwok people
- Sierra Miwok

Notes

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Total population

220 adults^[1]

Regions with significant populations

 United States (California)

Languages

English, historically Northern Sierra Miwok language, Central Sierra Miwok language, and Southern Sierra Miwok language

Related ethnic groups

other Miwok tribes

1. ^ Tribal Roster as of January 12, 2015.

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