



Wilton Rancheria Courts
Annual Report 2022

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WILTON RANCHERIA JOURNEY AND VISION STATEMENTS

Journey Statement

As Miwok and Nisenan people of Wilton Rancheria, original stewards of the Sacramento Valley and Foothills, we shall protect and enhance our Tribal sovereignty, cultural traditions, and homelands. By promoting health, wellness, economic success, and education, the Tribe will continue to build a sovereign nation that honors its history and ancestors, while securing the future for following generations.

Vision

A culturally and economically thriving community of self-governing, resilient people united by shared values and traditions, reflective of our ancestors' dreams.

OUR TEAM

Chief Judge and Key Staff



Chief Judge Christine Williams
Term: 2020-2024



Samantha Cypret, Court Director

Wilton Rancheria Traditional Court

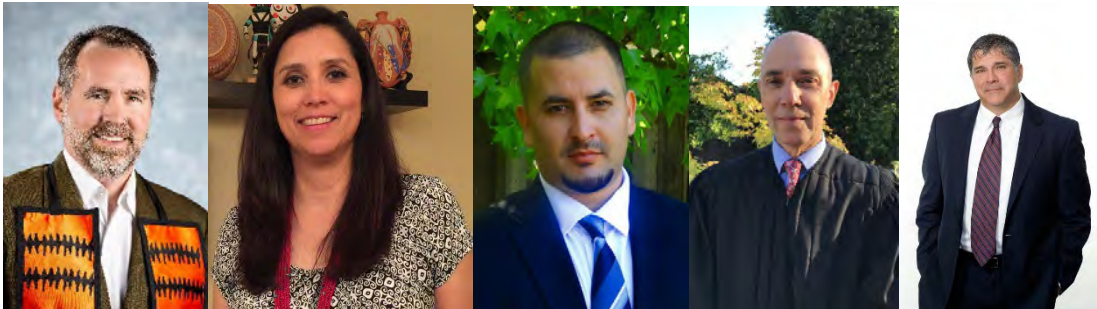
Current Term: 2022-2024



From Left: Mary Rangel, Jeannie McKean, Frank Custino, Joyce Dozier, and Spokesperson Mary Tarango

Wilton Rancheria Appellate Panel

Current Term: 2020-2024



From Left: Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. Charlene Jackson (Navajo Nation), Hon. Victorio Shaw (Hoopa Valley Tribe), Hon. Joseph Wiseman, and Chief Judge Treaver Hodson (Wilton Rancheria)

2022 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Tribal Court Adopted the Summary of Recommendations and Strategic Action Plan from the 2018 Tribal Court Assessment Report.

This Tribal Court Assessment Report provides the Wilton Rancheria a modified model of the Tribal Court Performance Standards used to evaluate existing court, to assist in meeting their stated goal of establishing a tribal court. The Report seeks to provide guidance to the Tribe as it creates its justice system. It has been engineered to comply with the specific statutory mandates for tribal court surveys as articulated in 25 U.S.C. Section 3612(b).

The Report measures policy considerations and best practices in five distinct areas:

- (1) Access to Justice; Court is fair and accessible to the community
- (2) Expedition and Timeliness; Court responds to resolves matters efficiently
- (3) Equality, Fairness, and Integrity; Court is impartial and provides all parties with due process of law (notice and an opportunity to be heard)
- (4) Independence and Accountability; Court Operates Independently and Transparently
- (5) Specific Findings and Needs

SUMMARY REPORT ON GOALS, OUTCOMES AND ACTIVITIES

Goal (1) Access to Justice

Outcome: Court is fair and accessible to the community.

Activities	Report
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct planning sessions with all stakeholders in advance of opening the Court. 2. Codify the Tribe’s Ordinances. 3. Conduct Outreach to Notify & Educate Tribal Members about the New Court. 4. Acquire a Court Recording System with Amplification Capabilities. 5. Locate a Site for the Courthouse. Create & Equip the Courtroom & Court Offices. 6. Periodically Review Accommodations for Participants with Physical Disabilities & Address Identified Needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed in 2020 with the Tribal Leadership. 2. Completed November 2022. Court has reviewed all drafts and proofs and has handed them off to Vice Chairperson and Tribal Council for Final Adoption. 3. Completed January 2022. Conducted Town Hall meetings January 13, 2022, and January 15, 2022 and sent out a community survey about the Court Strategic Planning. 4. Completed for current Courtroom in 2021. Amplification is not currently necessary. 5. Ongoing. Potential sites have been evaluated but grant funding for construction will not be available until the land has been placed in to trust. 6. Completed December 2022. The Court will complete their move in January 2023 to new location that is ADA-compliant.

Goal (2) Expedition and Timeliness

Outcome: Court Infrastructure is in place to resolve matters efficiently.

Activities	Report
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop/Update Clerk’s Manual. 2. Obtain an Appropriate Case Management System. 3. Hire Judge(s) and Court Staff. 4. Hire or Contract with Needed Professionals. 5. Undergo Court Start-Up Training. 6. Hire Consultants to Create the Clerk’s Manual and Judge’s Bench Book. 7. Hire Consultants to Train Staff. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing. No progress in 2022. 2. Completed 2021. 3. Completed. Chief Judge appointed 2020, Court Director hired 2021, Self-Help Attorney hired 2021, five Appellate Court Judges appointed 2020, five Traditional Court Elders re-appointed 2022. 4. Completed. See above plus and two code development consultants. 5. Completed 2021 and 2022. 6. Ongoing. The Chief Judge and Samantha need to review, revise and adopt current drafts. 7. Completed 2022. Court Director has attended Off-site Training and on-site training with Chief Judge.

Goal (3) Equality, Fairness, and Integrity

Outcome: Court is impartial and provides all parties with due process of law (notice and an opportunity to be heard).

Activities	Report
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Judge’s Bench Book. 2. Post Dockets in Advance of Court Date and Post in a Public Place; Attempt to Keep Changes to a Minimum. 3. Review the Tribe’s Existing Ordinances. Revise & Add Ordinances, as Needed, and Codify Them. 4. Create Court Rules, Policies, & Procedures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not Started. To be completed after Clerk’s Manual. 2. Not Started. Court hearings are online and not accessible to outside parties at this time. For the future, the Court needs to post online and provide public access to hearings. 3. Ongoing. We have contracted with two code development consultants to draft new codes for vulnerable members including child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse. 4. Rules of General Application, Rules for Bar Association, Rules for Appellate Procedure, Rules of Civil Procedure, Rules for Appeals of Government Decisions, Rules for Constitutional Questions, Rules for Peace and Security Act Enforcement Act were Adopted in 2020, and Rules for the Traditional Court were adopted in 2022.

Goal (4) Independence and Accountability

Outcome: Court operates independently and transparently.

Activities	Report
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a Court page on the Tribe’s Website or standalone Court website. 2. Draft Job Descriptions for All Court Positions, Whether Employees or Contractors. 3. The Court and Tribal Council Should Regularly Meet to Discuss Each Other’s Needs and How to Meet Them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed 2020. Initially created in 2020. Last updated with Self Help Information July 19, 2022. 2. Completed for all proposed positions November 2022. 3. Ongoing. The Tribal Court has a standing quarterly presentation to Tribal Council with additional meetings to be scheduled, as necessary.

Goal (5) Traditional Court and Facilities

Outcome: Utilize Traditional Court in Court Development and Provide Secure Facilities for Staff and Public.

Activities	Report
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Structure the Traditional Court. 2. Establish Emergency Policies and Procedures and Train Employees on Their Use. 3. Implement Security/Emergency Recommendations Regarding Court Planning, Infrastructure, Personnel and Equipment. 4. Configure Courtroom and Offices to Provide Maximum Security. 5. Acquire Appropriate Courtroom and Office Furniture and Equipment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Traditional Court Elders were initially Appointed in 2020. The Traditional Court Rules were adopted May 10, 2022. The Elders were reappointed May 24, 2022. 2. Not started. 3. Not complete due to current Court location. However, a new location has been secured and will establish a robust security plan for the new location. 4. Construction has been completed to improve security at the new location. 5. Completed in 2021.

TRIBAL COURT DATA AND HIGHLIGHTS

Case Data

The court handled cases in 2021 and 2022 as follows:

Types of New Cases	2021 New cases	2022 New Cases
Constitutional Questions	2	1
Civil Claims	2	2
Peace and Security Act	0	1
Juvenile*	0	2
Wedding**	0	1
Total	4	7

Cases Closed	2021 Cases Closed	2022 Cases Closed
Total	2	9

* The Court handled the juvenile cases under the general jurisdiction of the Tribal Court. There is no written tribal law in place to handle juvenile or family law matters.

** Wedding performed under the authority of a Tribal Council Resolution.

Self-Help Center

The Wilton Rancheria Courts' Self-Help Center provides the following services for Wilton Rancheria Tribal members:

- Individual Assistance – Free legal information and guidance to Tribal members from our Self-Help Attorney, AmyAnn Taylor. Ms. Taylor is experienced in tribal, state, and federal law. She can help Tribal members determine the most effective and appropriate approach to address their legal issues. She will also be available to review forms to ensure they are ready to file with the appropriate court.
- Legal Clinics - Free legal clinics providing education on topics of law that members can benefit from.
- Facilities – Free use of the Self-Help Center computer system for legal research and form preparation. Those looking to print out their own court forms and/or fill them out online can use our self-help computer/printer, available in our Self-Help Corner.

Individual Assistance

The great majority of the Self-Help Attorney's time is spent assisting individual members with specific legal matters. From January to December of 2022, the Self-Help Center offered 24 hours per month/288 hours for the year of one-on one legal assistance. On average the self-help attorney assisted 23 members per month on a wide variety of legal topics including, Family Law, Child Welfare, Housing, Real Property, Immigration, Trust and Estates, Abuse/Protection, Employment, Contracts, Expungement, Personal Injury, Public Benefits, Tribal Court Matters, and Other miscellaneous matters. The table below represents an annual breakdown of the percentage of time dedicated to each type of legal matter.

Legal Matter Types	Amount of Time
Trust and Estates	36%
Family Law	26%
Abuse/Protection	7%
Child Welfare	5%
Housing	5%
Real Property	5%
Expungement	4%
Other miscellaneous	3%
Tribal Court Matters	3%
Immigration	2%
Contracts	2%
Employment	1%
Personal Injury	1%
Public Benefits	0%



Legal Clinics

The Self-Help Center Held five (5) clinics in 2022. The 2022 clinics held were: Taxation, Small Business Start-Up, Know Your Rights – Engaging with Law Enforcement (youth), Know Your Rights – Engaging with Law Enforcement (adult), and Estate Planning for Elders. These clinics were attended by nearly 70 tribal members.

Strategic Planning

After conducting research in 2021 about court models we began our Tribal Court Strategic Planning process in 2022. We held two Town Hall workshops on January 13, 2022 and January 15, 2022 to review the strategic planning process with the general membership and to review the survey questions we created to gather input. We posted this PowerPoint on the intranet. We mailed the survey questions to each member as well in an attempt to collect as much information as possible.

Finally, our Court Strategic Planning Team conducted a two-day Strategic Planning Meeting on March 24 and 25, 2022 to develop the Wilton Rancheria Courts’ mission statement, goals and action plans. This plan will guide the court activities, budgeting and reporting for the future.

Partnership Work

Legal Externs from McGeorge School of Law

In 2021 the Court developed a relationship with McGeorge Law School located in Sacramento. As a result, we have had a legal extern every academic semester since Fall 2021. These externs have been tremendously helpful working in the Self-Help Center and in the development of additional materials for the Court. Our current extern has requested to stay with us through the Spring semester 2022. This will be his third semester working with the Court.

Federal Indian Law at McGeorge School of Law

McGeorge approached the Court to assist them with offering Federal Indian Law annually. Chief Judge Williams and Samantha completed their first semester teaching Federal Indian Law in Fall 2022.

California Tribal Court Judges Association

Judge Williams continues to represent the Wilton Rancheria Tribal Court as the Chairperson for the California Tribal Court Judges Association. The organization meets every other month discussing issues in common and providing collective letters of support as needed.

Tribal Court State Court Forum

Judge Williams serves as an appointed to Tribal Court State Court Forum which is an advisory committee to the California Judicial Council. The Forum meets virtually every two months and holds one in-person meeting a year. Judge Williams was able to attend the in-person, one-day meeting in San Francisco.

Sacramento ICWA Best Practices Round Table

Sacramento County Superior Court hosts an ICWA Best Practices Work group that meets periodically. Judge Williams attends these meetings to offer expertise and guidance as the partner tribal judge to Sacramento County.

Tribal Justice Collaborative Northern California Judges' Dinner

On December 19th, the Court hosted the 4th annual Tribal Justice Collaborative Northern California Judges' Dinner at the Elk Grove Park Pavilion. Judge Williams was the emcee for the event and Director Cypret was in charge of the facilities set up and keeping the event on schedule. The purpose of the event is to bring together Tribal Court judges from across the country as well as to highlight the work being done on the state court level. We were honored to host judges from throughout the nation, including Alaska, Minnesota, and Mississippi, and Sacramento County Superior Court.



ANNUAL REPORT QUESTIONS FROM TRIBAL COUNCIL

1. *What are some things you have learned or challenges you have faced while trying to meet your goals?*
The Barriers the court faces to exercising full jurisdiction are a lack of enforceable tribal laws, a limited Indian Child Welfare Department, a lack of tribal law enforcement and no tribal Attorney General/ prosecuting attorney.
2. *What services, please show quantifiable data (quarter by quarter), has your office provided to the General Council?*
Please see the above sections for Case Data and Self-Help Center.
3. *Do you need any clarification of your law(s) or have any suggestions on how we can make it/them better?*
We will be bringing laws that expand the types of cases the court is authorized to hear in 2023.
4. *What policies or manuals are available to the General Council?*
We have made all of the current forms available on the Member's Only SharePoint. We plan to transition them to the public website following feedback that the SharePoint is difficult to access and navigate. We have also added the [Self-Help Acknowledgment Form](#) to the Wilton website (click hyperlink to see form). The completion of this form is a pre-requisite for self-help services.
5. *What policies or manuals are available to the general public?*
We currently have all of the [Self-Help materials and legal clinics available](#) on the Tribe's website (Click hyperlink to see website materials).
6. *What policies or manuals are you working on?*
We are currently working on the Court Clerk manual and the policies surrounding the transition for the grievance and ethics complaints to the Court.
7. *Is there any other information/feedback you would like to provide to the Tribal Council?*
The Court would like to thank the Tribal Council for their continued support by supporting the move to our new office space, ongoing judicial appointments, adoption of court rules and 2023 budget approval.