

# Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians Profile

*Prepared for the:*  
**Dixie, Fishlake & Manti-La Sal National Forests  
Forest Plan Revision  
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*Prepared by:*  
**Utah Governor's Office of Planning and Budget**  
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## SKULL VALLEY BAND OF GOSHUTE INDIANS—OVERVIEW



### Contact

Skull Valley Band of Goshute  
Indians

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### Governance

By Executive Committee  
(Chairman, Vice-Chair,  
and Tribal Secretary) and  
General Council, which is the  
membership of the Tribe

### Current Issues

*Hazardous waste storage for  
economic development*

### Tribal Land

Approximately 18,000 acres

The Goshutes have inhabited the Southwestern part of the United States for thousands of years, and were the traditional inhabitants of the Great Basin of Utah and Nevada. They lived in the area between the Oquirrh Mountains on the east and Steptoe Mountain in eastern Nevada, and from the south end of the Great Salt Lake to a point almost parallel with the south end of Utah Lake. There are also indications that they had established some areas of the Wasatch Front. This area has some of the most arid conditions on the continent, as well as one of the most varied regions in terms of climate, topography, flora and fauna. The tribe was sustained by an extraordinary diversity of food and medicinal plants, wild berries, plants, seeds, small game and insects. They survived with their broad understanding of growing cycles, variations in climate, and animal distribution patterns.

The Goshute are part of the larger Shoshonean-speaking Native American groups. At their peak the Goshutes numbered about 20,000. The first contact with whites was documented in 1826. The contact with whites remained sporadic and insignificant from that time until the arrival of the Mormons in 1847 when contact became continual and prolonged. Today there are less than 500 Goshutes, of which 124 belong to the Skull Valley Band. Approximately thirty members live on the reservation, some on a permanent basis and some on a temporary basis. The balance live in the outlying cities or out-of-state.

On December 12, 1863, a treaty was signed with the U.S. Government. In 1917, and again in 1918, by Executive Order, the U.S. Government set aside and reserved a specific area of land for the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation. The Reservation today consists of approximately 18,000 acres.

Having lost much of their traditional land, the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians have few natural resources to sustain them. They are also surrounded by numerous polluting, waste storage and testing facilities, such as MagCorp, Envirocare, Intermountain Power Plant, and Dugway Proving Grounds and must rely on economic development that is consistent with these industries. They currently lease a rocket test facility located on the Reservation from which they derive their income and benefits. They have been approached by numerous entities and have decided against a business relationship with most of them because they did not meet the strict criteria standards which the Band has established.

*A History of Utah American Indians (2000).* ed. Forrest S. Cuch. Utah State University Press, Logan Utah  
*Utah Historical Society, Division of Indian Affairs Tribal Profiles, 1997*

<http://dced.utah.gov/indian/Today/goshute.html>

<http://www.skullvalleygoshutes.org/>