



San Diego's Indian Tribal Flags

Donald T. Healy

Abstract

San Diego County, California is the southwestern-most mainland county in the United States. It is home to one of America's top ten cities and sun-drenched beaches and is the classic example of what might be called the "California life-style". The county is also home to more federally recognized tribes than any other in the United States.

This paper will present a brief history of the reasons behind the abundance of tribes and will present brief histories of some of those tribes. As symbols of the various tribes, their flags will be shown and their symbolism explained. It will show how the modern tribal emblems were created based upon their distinct and shared histories. While time constricts the number of tribes that can be detailed, flags of other San Diego and Southern California tribes will at least be shown.



Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay (Diegueño) Nation

SAN DIEGO'S INDIAN TRIBAL FLAGS

Each of the fifty states in the U.S. is divided into counties. Two call them different names—Alaska has boroughs and Louisiana, with its French heritage, calls them parishes. Two states, Connecticut and Rhode Island, do not have functioning governmental counties, simply geographic designations. Most counties nationwide are headed by a county executive and have county supervisors as their legislative branch.

Of the counties found in the 48 contiguous states, the southwestern-most is San Diego County, California. With a total area of just over 4,525 square miles (11, 271 km²) it is the 84th largest. With an U.S. Census Bureau estimated population of 3,001,000 in 2008, San Diego County is the third most populous county in the State of California. Only neighboring Los Angeles County and Orange County are more populated. A year later its population in 2009 was estimated at 3,208,466, (Showley, Roger (December 18, 2009). “S.D. County’s population tops 3.2 million”, *San Diego Union Tribune*) making it the fifth most-populous county in the United States and giving it a population greater than 20 of the 50 U.S. states. San Diego County is bordered by Orange County and Riverside County on its north, by Imperial County on its east, and the Pacific Ocean on its west and southwest.

San Diego County is home to 18 federally recognized Indian reservations, more than any other county in the United States. Although they are typical in size to other California Indian reservations, many of which use the term “Rancheria”, they are relatively tiny by national standards and all together total 200.2 square miles (518.5 km²) out of the county’s 4,525 square miles.

Four tribal groupings make up the indigenous Indians of San Diego County: the Kumeyaay-Diegueño (K-D), the Luiseño (L) or Payomkowishum, the Cupeño, and the Cahuilla (C-C). The first two tribes have traditional ties to the ancient chain of Spanish missions that ranged up from the current Mexican-US border to the northernmost in the City of Sonoma.

The Kumeyaay-Diegueño and the Luiseño were once called Mission Indians and were tied to the two Jesuit Missions found in the county. The Kumeyaay-Diegueño were associated with, the Mission San Diego de Alcalá located in the modern city of San Diego (San Diego-Diegueño) and the Luiseño were tied to the Mission San Luis Rey de Francia (San Luis Rey-Luiseño) located in the north-county city of Oceanside. The Kumeyaay-Diegueño are further divided into two geographic groupings: the Iipay, located in the southern portion of their traditional homelands and the Tipay, which dominate the north.

The reservations located in San Diego county are:

- Barona Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Campo Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Capitán Grande Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, also known as Cuyapaipe (K-D)
- Inaja and Cosmit Indian Reservation (K-D)

- Jamul Indian Village (K-D)
- La Jolla Indian Reservation (L)
- La Posta Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Los Coyotes Indian Reservation (C-C)
- Manzanita Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Mesa Grande Indian Reservation(K-D)
- Pala Indian Reservation (L,C)
- Pauma and Yuima Indian Reservation (L)
- Rincon Indian Reservation (L)
- San Pasqual Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Santa Ysabel Indian Reservation, also known as Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel (K-D)
- Sycuan Indian Reservation (K-D)
- Viejas Indian Reservation (K-D)

Two-thirds of San Diego’s reservations belong to the Kumeyaay-Diegueño tribe.

The Kumeyaay-Diegueño Tribe

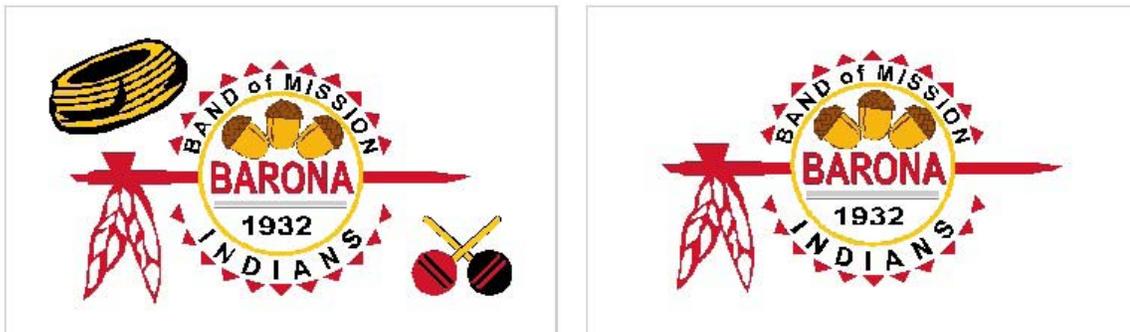


The Kumeyaay-Diegueño adopted a flag for the entire Kumeyaay-Diegueño Nation in December, 2006. It is a buff colored field criss-crossed and bordered by narrow stripes of white, black, red and blue. The top stripe and the upper right diagonal are white; the left/hoist edge and the upper left diagonal are black. The bottom and the lower left diagonal are red and the outer/fly edge and the lower right diagonal are blue. Centered on the flag in gold lettering is the nation’s name, “Kumeyaay-Diegueño Nation”. Ringing the name are the twelve seals of the San Diego County tribes in full color. In addition to the Kumeyaay-Diegueño in San Diego County and Imperial County, the national organization speaks for the five bands in Baja California Norte State in Mexico: the La

Huerta Band, the San Jose de la Zorra Band, the Juntas de Neji, the San Antonio Necua, and the Santa Catarina (Kumeyaay Paipai).

While information on all the California based Kumeyaay bands is insufficient to categorically state that all the bands possess tribal flags, a majority of the bands do, indeed, have flags. Time limits the number of tribes that can be discussed, but the few that can be presented will give a flavor for the elements of the tribal culture that are found significant to the people themselves.

The Barona Band



The first of the Kumeyaay bands to explore is the alphabetically first, the Barona Band. The Barona Band is found in the southern part of the county, just north of the city of El Cajon on the edge of the Cleveland National Forest. It is a land where the edges of the Anza Borrego Desert meet the pine and live oak trees of the mountain forests. The current reservation is just over 5,900 acres and is based in Lakeside, California. The reservation was acquired in 1932, and federal recognition of the band dates from that year as well. Originally part of the Capitan Grande Reservation, a major portion of that reservation was purchased to build the Capitan Grande Reservoir, leaving some of the tribe landless. Funds from the sale of those lands went to purchase the Barona Valley Ranch, the basis of today's reservation.

The nearly five hundred members of the Barona Band call themselves Kumeyaay, 'Iipay, or Diegueño, depending upon their personal choice—Kumeyaay being the greater tribal name that predated Spanish arrival, Diegueño referring to the subset associated with the Mission San Diego as state above, and 'Iipay being the name given to a local pre-historic pictograph of a red dancing human figure found within the borders of the reservation. 'Iipay Man acts as a symbol of the modern band and in many ways reinforces the thousand-plus-year heritage of the Barona Band as residents of modern San Diego County. 'Iipay is a variant of the Kumeyaay word *ipi* for "person".

Another symbol of the Barona Band is its white flag bearing the tribal logo. Two versions have existed, the newer one less detailed than the old flag. The current version features the sacred pipe, in red, crossing the center of the white field. This pipe has two feathers outlined in red and recalling that the modern Barona Band was once one of two bands that occupied the old Capitan Grande Reservation. Above the pipe is an arc of eleven small red triangles and "Band of Mission" in brown

lettering. Below is repeated the arc of triangles and the word “Indians”, again in brown. Overlaying the pipe is a white disc, edged in yellow. Upon the disc, starting at the top are three acorns in natural colors, the band’s name Barona in large red capital letters underlined with a gray bar and finally the year 1932 (in black), commemorating the federal recognition of the Band and its new home. The acorns are a tribute to one of the main foods of the Kumeyaay people, and a link to their long heritage in the area.

The older version included two additional symbols. In the upper left corner in yellow, with brown accents, was a traditional Kumeyaay woven basket. In the lower right were a pair of crossed rattles used in ritualistic dances, and the number two again referred to the former union of the two bands of Capitan Grande Kumeyaay people.

The Campo Band



Next in alphabetical order is the Campo Band. Established in 1893, the Campo Indian Reservation is a federal reservation in southeastern San Diego County, near the community of Campo. It has a total area is 16,512 acres in two distinct sections with a population around 351. The reservation is crossed by two major east-west highways, Interstate 8 and California Highway 94. The major economic power of the Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians lies on either side of the Interstate and is highlighted by their gleaming casino. At night, coming across on the Interstate, the area around the casino is an oasis of light hidden in the mountains of southern California just an hour or so east of San Diego.

The Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians has created a tribal seal that celebrates many aspects of the Campo Band’s history, both ancient and modern. At its heart is a white disc depicting four aspects of the Kumeyaay people and the Campo Reservation. In the upper left are four Kumeyaay baskets and platters behind which lie a handful of feathers. This celebrates the ancient utilitarian

artistry of the Kumeyaay people. Under the baskets is a statement that the tribe was established in 1893.

In the upper right is a map of the Campo Reservation in green or orange (both have been seen) along with the title “Campo Indian Reservation”. The lower left features a pair of Kumeyaay rattles which are used in both ceremonies and healing rituals but appear only on the seal, not on the flag.

The lower right displays one of the most dramatic modern sites on the reservation. It is a highway overpass that spans a valley on the reservation between two of the mountains of Southern California. The overpass is so high that at its base a visitor can see power lines passing under the road.

These elements of the seal are surrounded by a medium blue band that features “Campo Band Kumeyaay Reservation” in orange lettering. Outside this is a wreath of oak leaves in white edged in medium blue. Oaks, and especially the acorn, were a vital part of the ancient Kumeyaay culture and lifestyle. The acorn was an important foodstuff for the people for a millennium or more.

For a flag, the Campo Band uses a white banner with the tribal seal in the center.

The Ewiiapaayp Indian Reservation



Diverging from the pattern of seal on a plain white background is the flag of the Ewiiapaayp Indian Reservation. It is a federal reservation of Kumeyaay (Diegueño) Indians in the mountains in the eastern part of San Diego County. The total area is 4,103 acres, with no inhabitants. However, the Ewiiapaayp (Cuyapaipe) General Council administers the land.

The Ewiiapaayp Indian Reservation was established on 10 February 1893, under authority of the Act of 12 January 1891. The Mission Indian Relief Act of 1891 enacted the recommendations of the Jackson-Kinney report, stating “[t]he history of the Mission Indians for a century may be written in four words: conversion, civilization, neglect, outrage ... Justice and humanity alike demand the immediate action of Government to preserve for their occupation the fragments of land not already taken from them.”

The Ewiiapaayp Tribe is a federally recognized Indian tribe listed in the Federal Register as “The

Cuyapaipe Community of Diegueño Mission Indians of the Cuyapaipe Reservation, California.” The Bureau of Indian Affairs uses the name Cuyapaipe Band of Mission Indians. The Band identifies itself as “Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians”. The tribal affiliation is “Kumeyaay” and it is another of the 12 Kumeyaay bands in San Diego County.

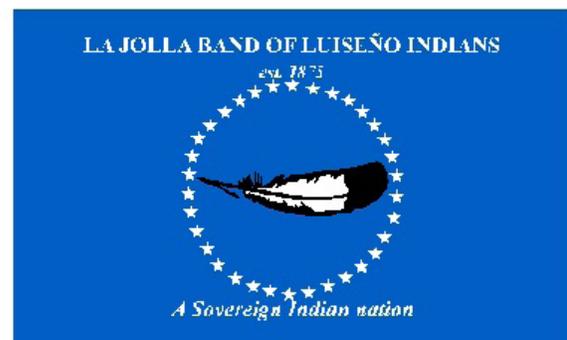
The tribe has petitioned the BIA to change its name to “The Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians”, however, this change can take years to effect. “Ewiiapaayp” is the Kumeyaay language word meaning “leaning rock.” This rock is on a high ridge of the Cuyapaipe Reservation and served as the touchstone and site-marker in the Kumeyaay’s travels from the coast to the mountains and the desert beyond. The inland Kumeyaay Bands were centered at the present day Cuyapaipe Reservation.

The band has adopted a flag of three stripes, black over white over red. Overlapping the three stripes in the center of the flag is a brown gourd drum with a black leather handle from which two strips of black leather dangle. On the surface of the drum is the seal of the Ewiiapaayp Band.

That seal is a round disc which has as its outermost edge a narrow white band. Next is a wide red band edged on both its inner and outer edges by very narrow black bands. The upper part of the red ring bears the band’s name “Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians” in extremely small yellow lettering. The bottom bears the phrase “Ewiiapaayp Indian Reservation” in similarly small yellow letters. In the center of these rings is a representation of the “Leaning Rock”.

To the left of the picture of “Leaning Rock” lies a pair of crossed rattles, a common element found in many Kumeyaay seals while on the right are a pair of piñon pine cones, a staple food of the Kumeyaay people. Slightly to the right of center, at the upper corner of the seal, is a single yellow five-pointed star. Its position over the rock recalls the role of “Leaning Rock” as a site-marker.

The La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians



The La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians is based on a nearly 10,000 acre reservation in the foothills of Mount Palomar in north central San Diego County. The reservation was created by an executive order issued by President Ulysses Grant in 1875. The land is rather lush compared to some land that lies on the other side of the mountain— the Anza Borrego Desert. This is a land of oak trees, source of the acorn, historically the major “grain” crop of the Luiseño and the basis of their dish called “wii wish”. The nearest major town is Valley Center and beyond that, Escondido.

The band, which exceeds 700 members, has adopted a flag of blue. Actually this band is on its second version of the band's flag. The elements are quite similar, but the original flag included a pair of rattles in black and white that the new design omits. Rattles were, and are an integral part of Native music and dance ceremonies and have been a part of medicinal rites.

The original flag was pale blue with a large outline of a five-pointed star composed of 34 small dark blue stars. Above the huge star was the band's name "La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians" and directly below the name "est. 1875". Below the star was the legend "A Sovereign Indian Nation". Like the small stars, all writing is in dark blue. At the heart of the flag was a large white and black feather while to either side of the large star were those rattles.

The new flag is royal blue and all elements are white. The writing is the same, even the font employed. The rattles are now gone and the huge star has been converted to a circle, still using 34 small stars. The central element, that single black and white feather has not changed. The new design first appeared in 2007 or 2008.

The Pala Band of Mission Indians



The word Cupeño is a Spanish term, taking the native place-name Kupa and adding the Spanish suffix "eño" which translates into a person who lives in or hails from Kupa. The Cupeños, however, called themselves Kuupangaxwiche, or "people who slept here." They were one of the smallest tribes located in Southern California and it is unlikely that they ever numbered more than 1000 people. Peaceful hunter/gatherers of mountain and desert cultures, they descended from the Tatic peoples that arrived in southern California some 2,500 years ago.

The Cupeño were a creation of the Spanish missionization which separated the tribe from their kinsmen, the Cahuilla and the Luiseño. They lived in the mountainous area near the headwaters of the San Luis Rey River but were evicted from their homelands by the State of California and the federal government in 1903. Their traditional homelands were in the mountain valley of San Jose de Valle

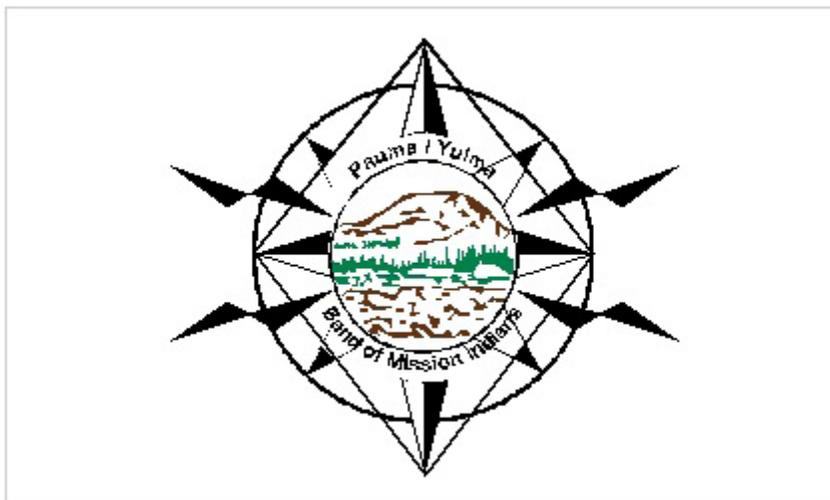
that held the villages of Cupa, now Warner’s Hot Springs and Wilakalpa. There three large Southern California peoples met, the Cahuilla, the Luiseño, and the Diegueño or Kumeyaay.

The Pala Band of Mission Indians is located in northern San Diego County, just northeast of Escondido, off of Interstate 15. Most of the 918 enrolled members live on their 12,300-acre reservation. That reservation was established for Cupeño and Luiseño Indians, a rare occurrence where one reservation was created for two distinct tribes. They now have lived and integrated themselves so thoroughly that they consider themselves to be one people, the Pala.

The seal of the Pala Band of Mission Indians is spread across a white banner to form the tribal flag. The seal is dominated by an outline map of the two distinct segments of the Pala Indian Reservation. The larger of the two contains a pinwheel-like design of four curving elements. To the upper right of the reservation outline are two California condors soaring over a pair of mountains identified as “Warner’s Hot Springs”. Below the mountains are two large feathers for the Cupeño and the Luiseño people that form the Pala Band. Along with the two feathers is a Cupeño bowl.

Below the map of the reservation is the identifier “Pala Indian Reservation” which is separating the map from a pair of traditional rattles, or hand drums. The entire tableau is bracketed with the claim of the Pala Band “We are the People from Kupa” in English at the bottom and in the Cupeño language at the top—“Chemesh Ataxem Kuupangax.” All elements shown on the flag appear in dark green.

The Luiseño Indians of the Pauma Reservation



The Luiseño Indians of the Pauma Reservation occupy a federal reservation in the northeastern corner of San Diego County, against the foothills of Mount Palomar, with the impressive observatory. It is also known as the Pauma and Yuima Reservation. The Yuima are a separate clan of the Luiseño. The reservation has a total area of 5,877 acres, with some 225 acres serving as the community center. Two separated 12.5 acre tracts located on the slopes of Mount Palomar are referred to as Yuima tracts

1 and 2. These tracts are about five miles from the main reservation and are unpopulated. The population on the reservation is around 190.

The Pauma Band of Mission Indians was established in 1886 by the U.S. government and federally recognized in 1891. The Pauma Band's tribal affiliation is Luiseño and it is one of the seven bands of Luiseño people located throughout San Diego and Riverside Counties that are federally recognized as Indian nations. Traditionally, there were two clans that came from the Pauma area, the Majel Clan and the Pachito Clan. In the years past, each of the six bands had a chief to represent their people. Today, the two clans still exist and most still reside on the Pauma Reservation.

The Luiseño or Puyumkowitchum are a Shoshonean (Takic) language-speaking group that traditionally lived in a 1,500-square-mile area in today's Orange, Riverside, and northern San Diego counties of California. Cultural traditions and archaeological evidence contend that the Shoshonean groups moved to Southern California some 5,000 years ago from the Great Basin that fills most of modern Nevada.

The Pauma Band has a white flag with a simplified version of the tribal seal in the center. When used as a seal, the elements are shown in full color, while on the flag it is shown as a line drawing. The seal is a circle upon which is laid a rhombus with the tall points pointing to the north and south. In the center is a smaller disc in which is a landscape of the Pauma lands. Dominating the background is Mount Palomar, drawn in brown lines. Across the center is a line of dark green conifer trees. In the foreground are the flatlands of the reservation, again drawn in brown lines.

Emanating from the central disc are eight triangular rays, each of white and black. The north-south directional points are black on the right and white on the left, while the east-west points have black on the top and white on the bottom. The four secondary directional points have white on the inner portion and black tips. Between the north and south points and the neighboring secondary points are black shooting lightning bolts composed of two black triangles.

Above the central landscape disc are the words "Pauma/Yuima" in black letters. Below that disc is the phrase "Band of Mission Indians" also in black.

The Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation



The Sycuan Rancheria is a federal reservation of Kumeyaay (Diegueño) Indians in eastern San Diego County, six miles from the city of El Cajon. The total area of the reservation is 640 acres, with about 33 tribal members on the reservation. While the Kumeyaay have lived in what is now San Diego County for well over a thousand years, they are most famous for their association with the old Spanish missions, in the case of the Kumeyaay, the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, which lent its name to both the city and county as well as the Diegueño Indians.

The Sycuan Band employs a flag made up of the four sacred colors in Indian culture. The flag has three horizontal stripes of red over white over black with a yellow triangle at the hoist. On that triangle appears the seal of the Sycuan Band in black on a yellow background. The four colors are seen as representing all things in nature that occur in sets of four. These include the four seasons, the four prime directions, the four ages of man (infant, youth, adult, and old age), and many other groupings.

The seal has an outer ring bearing “Sycuan Band” at the top and “of the Kumeyaay Nation” around the bottom. In the central disc are four desert blossoms surrounding a Sycuan basket and a matate (grinding stone) with a mano (smashing rock used on grain in the matate) ,used for grinding corn, acorns, pine nuts, and other staples.

These flags are representative of the flags employed by the various tribes and bands found in San Diego County, California, home to more tribes and reservations than any other county in the United States.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

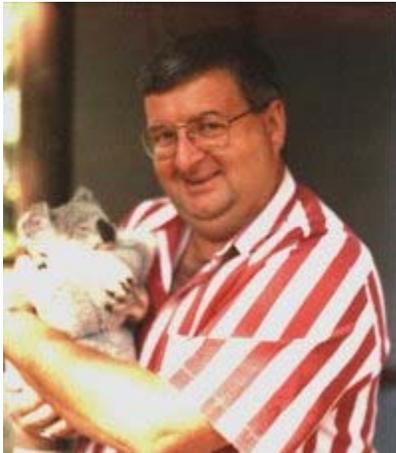
These flags and their associated stories could not have been documented without the considerable assistance and cooperation of many people.

Firstly, I must thank the chiefs and tribal government officials who spent time supplying the background behind their tribal seals and their meanings.

Secondly, Dr. Peter Orenski and TMEALF Co., which encouraged many tribes appearing in the updated version of *Native American Flags* to adopt flags for the first time in their history.

Lastly, special thanks must go out to Chrystian Kretowicz who supplied much of the information on many of the newly added tribes from California. He devoted hours seeking out information on many of the small tribes that are all too easy to overlook and shared it with both Dr. Orenski and me.

About the Author



Donald T. Healy is a past president of NAVA and author of *Raven 3/4* “Flags of the Native Peoples of the United States”. This evolved into the book *Native American Flags* published by the University of Oklahoma Press and co-authored by Dr. Peter Orenski. That book is currently being updated for a planned 2012 release.

Before retiring in 2006, Mr. Healy was employed by the State of New Jersey’s Office of Information Technology where he served as the State’s Enterprise Data Architect. Since retiring he has moved to Bisbee, Arizona, where he shares his home with two beautiful rescued greyhounds.