The Cocopah Indian Tribe, known as the River People, have lived along the lower Colorado River for centuries. The Cocopah Reservation was established in 1917, and in 1964 the Tribe established a Tribal Council and its first Constitution.

The Cocopah Indian Tribe is one of seven descendant Tribes from the Yuman language-speaking people that lived along the Colorado River. Although the Cocopah people had no written language, history and traditions have been passed down orally and through the diaries and journals of outside travelers along the Colorado River.

According to the 2010 decennial census, approximately 817 individuals live on the Cocopah Tribe Reservation in Arizona (a 20.3 percent decrease in population from the year 2000).

The Cocopah Tribe is actively involved in habitat restoration efforts along the Colorado River.

Source: indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com

**LOCATION**

The Cocopah Tribe is located in the southwest corner of Arizona near the California and Mexico borders. The land area consists of more than 6,500 acres along the lower Colorado River, with a land base of 9.4 square miles. The reservation is comprised of three non-contiguous regions: the North, East, and West Reservations. The East and West Reservations are located 15 minutes from each other on either side of the town of Somerton. The North Reservation is located in Yuma.

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SOCIAL & HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS*

Approximately one-quarter of the Cocopah Tribe is under the age of 18, and another quarter of the tribe is 65 years or older. The proportion 65 years and older is significantly higher than the figures for the State of Arizona and Yuma County. The median age for the tribe is 39, compared to a median age of 35.9 for the State of Arizona.

Approximately 70 percent of the 363 occupied housing units on the Cocopah reservation are renter-occupied.

The Cocopah Tribe is made up of diverse households. Households are more likely to be multigenerational compared to the State of Arizona (defined by the Census as more than two generations living together). Traditional husband-wife families are predominant (61 percent), and households headed by a single female make up more than a quarter (29 percent) of all households.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Cocopah households have a significantly high poverty rate (33 percent), with 31 percent classified as “severely poor” due to earning less than half of the poverty threshold. The percent in poverty is especially high for youth—53 percent of those between age 6 and 17 live in poverty. The median household income for the Cocopah Tribe is $43,300.

In terms of occupation, more than half of all workers work for the local or federal government.

ENTERPRISES

- Cocopah Casino, Resort, and Conference Center is located between Yuma, San Luis, and the City of Somerton.

- Cocopah Speedway race track is located in Somerton, Arizona, and offers numerous racing series throughout the year.

- Cocopah Rio-Colorado golf course is a public 9-hole golf course in Somerton, Arizona.

- Cocopah RV and Golf Resort is situated along the Colorado River near Yuma, Arizona, with 449 sites directly on the golf course and 365 additional sites at the resort.

- The Cocopah Museum and Cultural Center is located on the West Reservation and includes hand-crafted exhibits, meeting space, and a gift shop. The museum is surrounded by a 1.5-acre park featuring a traditional dwelling replica made from natural elements.

- Serving the Yuma and Somerton area, Cocopah’s Wild River Family Entertainment Center has bowling, laser tag, an arcade, and a sports bar.

*All statistics on this page are from the 2010 Decennial Census or the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.
Articles of the Cocopah Tribe Constitution that may pertain to institutional research protocol:

Article VI -- Powers of the Tribal Council

Art. VI, Sec. A (1) To represent the Cocopah Tribe and act in all matters that concern the welfare of the Cocopah Tribe and to make any and all decisions which are consistent with this Constitution and the Statutes of the United States.

Art. VI, Sec. A (8) To regulate its own procedures; to appoint subordinate committees, commissions, and boards; and to create and regulate subordinate organization for economic and other purposes.

Art. VI, Sec. A (9) To negotiate with federal government, state, city and county officials.

Art. VI, Sec. B (5) To promulgate and enforce ordinances providing for the levying of taxes; dealing with law and order, domestic relations, and welfare; providing for the licensing of members and non-members for purposes of hunting and fishing on the reservation, and for the exclusion from the territory of the community of persons not so licensed and establishing proper agencies for the enforcement of such ordinances upon the Reservation.

Federal

42 USC § 3515b requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to adopt appropriate regulations for the use of federal funds to pay for any research program or project or any program, project, or course which is of an experimental nature, or any other activity involving human participants that present a danger to the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of a participant or subject.

45 C.F.R. § 46.101 requires that research supported by a federal department or agency (defined by 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(e)) must be reviewed and approved by an institutional review board.