

# A Public Policy Suggestion for a Pit River Tribal Library and Cultural Knowledge Center

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## Version 1.0 — Public Discussion Draft

I'm sharing this as a plain-language public policy suggestion for community discussion and proper tribal review.

**What this is:** A public-facing proposal meant to help the Pit River Tribe consider establishing a tribally governed library and cultural knowledge center.

**What this is not:** This is not an official tribal statement, not a substitute for tribal government review, and not a claim of authority. This is an independent suggestion offered for discussion. Final decisions about governance, cultural protocols, funding, staffing, access, and implementation belong to the Pit River Tribe and the appropriate tribal authorities.

## The proposal

The Pit River Tribe should consider authorizing a planning process for a **Pit River Tribal Library and Cultural Knowledge Center** — a tribally governed public resource that would support reading, literacy, digital access, youth learning, community information, tribal-reference support, and careful cultural knowledge stewardship.

This is not just about putting books on shelves. This is about creating a practical, people-serving institution that helps families, youth, elders, staff, and community members access knowledge, services, technology, and culturally grounded resources in a way that reflects Pit River conditions and needs.

The strongest model is a **hybrid approach**: one modest fixed hub, paired with rotating outreach and services across Pit River communities. This design recognizes that Pit River people are spread across multiple bands and locations, and a single building alone would not solve the access problem.

## Why this matters

Access to knowledge, learning, digital tools, and trusted information is not equal for every Pit River family or community. Pit River people are spread across 11 bands and multiple locations, and resources are scattered.

Public libraries do valuable work, but they are not designed to serve as tribally governed institutions answerable to Pit River priorities, cultural protocols, and self-determination. A tribal library cannot be replaced by a public one.

A tribally governed library and cultural knowledge center could address multiple needs in one place:

- reading and literacy support;
- youth homework and study support;
- public computer, printing, scanning, and internet access;
- job-search and form-filing assistance;
- community information and public notices;
- tribal-reference materials;

- family and community research support;
- language and cultural learning support;
- oral history and archival intake under proper authority;
- and careful handling of public, controlled, and culturally restricted materials.

## Early services

The Center would serve as a public-facing tribal institution for reading, learning, digital access, community information, and carefully managed tribal-reference support. Pilot services could include:

- a small reading and lending collection, including children's and Native-authored books;
- public-access computers and internet support;
- printing, scanning, and basic form-help support;
- GED, career, and educational support materials;
- youth reading activities and family literacy events;
- rotating pop-up library days across communities;
- tribal-reference materials for public or approved use;
- community information updates and resource navigation;
- and a controlled intake process for materials that may belong in archives, Heritage, or restricted collections.

## Clear boundaries

This proposal should be clear about what the library does and does not do.

The Center should **not** replace the Education Department. Education should continue to lead scholarships, testing support, formal educational assistance, and education-specific programs.

The Center should **not** replace Heritage or THPO. Heritage/THPO should continue to lead oral-history stewardship, cultural-resource protection, preservation standards, and governance of culturally restricted materials.

The Center should **not** make independent decisions about restricted cultural knowledge. Access to culturally sensitive materials must be governed by proper tribal protocols, designated authority, consent rules, and approved policy.

The Center should **not** duplicate existing public libraries. It should complement them while filling the gap that only a tribally governed Pit River institution can fill.

## Recommended service model

The recommended model is a **small fixed hub plus distributed outreach**.

**The fixed hub would provide:**

- secure storage;
- public-access technology;

- a starter book and reference collection;
- workspace for staff or volunteers;
- controlled intake for records, family materials, or cultural items;
- regular public hours;
- and coordination for grants, programs, and outreach.

**The distributed outreach model could include:**

- rotating band visits;
- pop-up library days;
- mobile lending or lending drop points;
- digital-help days;
- family literacy activities;
- youth reading events;
- community information tables;
- and partnerships with nearby libraries, schools, and tribal programs.

This design matters because a single building alone would not solve the access problem. The Center should be built for the geography and conditions of Pit River life.

## **Access and cultural safeguards**

The Center should use a tiered access model from the beginning.

### **Public access materials**

Books, public computers, general educational resources, community information, job and form-help materials, public notices, and general reference resources.

### **Tribal-reference materials**

Materials about Pit River history, tribal governance, public tribal documents, public cultural education materials, maps, reports, family research aids, and other materials approved for reference use.

### **Controlled-access materials**

Oral histories, family-donated materials, photographs, archival records, digitized documents, or sensitive historical materials that require consent, documentation, and review before access.

### **Restricted cultural materials**

Culturally sensitive knowledge, ceremonial information, protected materials, or other items that should only be governed by proper tribal authority, cultural protocols, Heritage/THPO standards, and approved access rules.

This structure protects the public-service function of the library while preventing the library from becoming an unauthorized gatekeeper over sensitive cultural knowledge.

## **Governance and planning**

The first official step should not be a grand opening. It should be authorization to plan.

A planning committee or designated working group should be authorized to develop recommendations on:

- community needs;
- mission and service model;
- governance structure;
- departmental boundaries;
- staffing and volunteer roles;
- space and facility needs;
- technology needs;
- collection development;
- public computer and digital access policy;
- cultural access protocols;
- oral history consent and donation forms;
- partnerships;
- funding opportunities;
- and a phased implementation timeline.

The committee should include appropriate tribal staff, community representatives, and advisors with relevant knowledge. It should coordinate with Education, Heritage/THPO, local public libraries, schools, and potential funding partners.

## **First-year goals**

The first year should focus on building a lawful, useful, and culturally responsible foundation.

Recommended first-year goals:

- complete a community needs assessment;
- draft a mission, vision, and three-year goals memo;
- identify a pilot space;
- prepare a starter collection plan;
- establish public computer and digital access rules;
- create basic collection, donation, and cultural access policies;
- define Library / Education / Heritage responsibilities;
- launch limited public hours;
- pilot youth, family, and digital-help services;
- begin community information support;
- develop a grant-readiness packet;
- and report findings back for tribal review.

## **Pilot budget range**

A realistic pilot should be presented in two tiers.

### **Lean Pilot Startup Budget - estimated \$28,500**

This would support public access technology, basic furnishings, a starter reading and tribal-reference collection, cultural materials handling supplies, staffing support, youth/community programming, and administrative setup.

### **Stronger First-Year Pilot - estimated \$52,000**

This would support more public devices, stronger furnishings, a broader youth/adult and Native-language/cultural collection, scanning and secured storage, part-time coordinator support, aides or interns, elder/cultural presenter honoraria, family literacy events, study/job-support workshops, and stronger policy/compliance preparation.

These are planning ranges, not final numbers. Final costs should be reviewed after space, staffing, equipment, insurance, utilities, software, maintenance, and long-term operating needs are clarified.

## **Funding strategy**

The Center should be built for grant readiness from the beginning. Potential funding and support categories include:

- tribal library grants;
- digital equity and technology access funding;
- education and literacy grants;
- language and cultural preservation support;
- archives and records-preservation support;
- youth and family programming support;
- partnerships with nearby libraries and schools;
- and technical assistance from library, museum, archival, and tribal-serving organizations.

The planning packet should include a funding shortlist, grant calendar, draft budget narrative, partnership list, and basic policy attachments.

## **Desired outcome**

The long-term goal is to create a permanent Pit River institution that supports literacy, education, digital equity, community information access, cultural continuity, community resilience, and self-determination through tribally governed library services.

A good tribal library would not only hold books. It would help people find information, support young people, help families navigate forms and resources, protect knowledge appropriately, preserve memory carefully, and create a trusted place where practical access to knowledge is treated as part of community wellbeing.

## **Recommended next action**

**Authorize a planning process for the Pit River Tribal Library and Cultural Knowledge Center.**

This planning process should produce:

- a community needs assessment;
- a proposed service model;
- a governance recommendation;
- a Library / Education / Heritage boundary matrix;
- draft operating policies;
- draft collection and access policies;
- a pilot budget;
- a space and staffing plan;
- a funding shortlist;
- and a phased implementation timeline.

### **Closing statement**

A Pit River Tribal Library and Cultural Knowledge Center would be a practical investment in people, memory, education, and access. It would give youth, families, elders, staff, and community members a tribally grounded place to read, learn, research, connect, and receive support.

Done carefully, it can strengthen tribal sovereignty without overstepping cultural protocols. It can support education without replacing the Education Department. It can support cultural continuity without taking authority away from Heritage or THPO. It can work alongside public libraries while doing what only a tribal institution can: serve Pit River people through Pit River governance.

This proposal should move forward carefully, with community input, proper authority, clear safeguards, and a pilot-first approach.