



Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Serving the Treaty Tribes of Western Washington



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Message from Chairman

Welcome to our web site. Webs, nets, networks — these are not new tools to us. The 20 treaty tribes of western Washington have used these tools for thousands of years. This electronic river we now all share provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another. Come, let us show you a little of what we are about.

Ours is a success story. Competition for natural resources in the past was fierce and often ended up with confrontations in court, wasting valuable time and limited financial resources. Cooperative management in the last twenty-odd years demonstrated a new way to overcome many of these differences. It is a dynamic process providing real, on-the-ground outcomes: protection for our streams, salmon, shellfish, and forests. We have known since the dawn of time the connectedness of property rights with property responsibilities, and, make no mistake about it, fishing rights are property rights. Long-term stability and certainty is provided by responsible resource management promoted by rational regulation.

Part of our success is based upon a network — a network of partners, friends and former foes. We sought common ground: what was good for the resource. The strategic locations occupied by the tribes within key watersheds throughout the state provide a safety-net for local resource protection. Not only was this cooperative approach effective, but it also was more efficient in applying federal, state, local government and industry initiatives to solve mounting environmental problems. Not the least of the efficiencies was the consolidation of federal regulatory requirements with its sacred trust obligations to tribal treaty rights.

The long-term goals of economic stability, renewable resources and regulatory certainty are shared by the tribes, who are working toward their own self-sufficiency. The industry, government and the public increasingly recognize their impact on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and other resources on which the tribes rely for their economic, cultural and spiritual survival.

Cooperative management relies upon the participation of all parties on an equal footing. The tribes are an integral part of the continued process. This has decreased confrontation and increased mutual understanding while avoiding costly litigation. Cooperative management results in increased economic vitality and a healthy environment. Everyone will benefit from rational management of our natural resources that contributes to the overall health and diversity of our ecosystem.

Welcome to our web site, our fishing site — our river!



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*Billy Frank, Jr.
Chairman, Northwest Indian
Fisheries Commission*

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