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Strength in Sharing

By Billy Frank Jr.
NWIFC Chairman

From bear grass to huckleberries to cedar and more, it’s getting harder and harder for the treaty Indian tribes in western Washington to find and access natural resources that are central to our culture.

We need the traditional foods, medicines and materials that make us who we are. Like salmon, shellfish and wildlife, these things are part of us as Indian people. They were so important to us that we reserved our right to gather them when we signed treaties with the U.S. government.

Traditional foods are especially important to Indian people today. Almost every one of us knows a person or a family who suffers from diabetes or some other illness – a lot of the time caused by a lack of traditional foods in our diet.

Our weavers, carvers and other artists work to help keep our culture alive, but they are having a difficult time finding the materials they need. Cedar trees are disappearing to development while other important plants are being damaged or killed by pollution.

We are encouraged by recent meetings with National Parks Service officials to discuss how we can access park lands to exercise our treaty gathering rights. Tribal access today is limited and varies from park to park. We are committed to working with the National Parks Service to ensure proper management of these lands so that we can return to places where we have always harvested.

Out on the coast, the Makah Tribe recently celebrated a 600-year-old cedar tree they received from the state Department of Natural Resources through the non-profit Potlatch Fund. The tree was growing on state land outside the tribe’s reservation but within the Makah traditional gathering area.

That big cedar tree is us. All of us. And it’s teaching us about sharing. Sharing makes us all stronger.

In July, the Makah shared gifts created from the giant tree at the Tribal Canoe Journey in Neah Bay. This annual celebration of our culture is hosted by a different tribe every year, and many of those who make the trip travel in cedar canoes.

It is the nature of Indian people to share. We have shared our land, water and other resources since the first non-Indians arrived in this region. Today we need that same kind of sharing so that we can continue to harvest the natural resources that keep ourselves and our culture alive and strong.
A massive run of Fraser River sockeye salmon this year provided a dream fishery for tribal fishermen, but can’t begin to make up for decades of poor returns that have devastated the tribal fishing economy.

More than three times as many sockeye returned to the Fraser as were expected, but tribes were unable to reach their harvest goals because of a diminished fishing fleet, delayed realization of the run’s magnitude, the diversion of the run through Canadian waters and overloaded processors.

The run of 34 million sockeye was the largest since 1913, but is not a sign of a resurgence.

“Based on the information we have, we expect poor sockeye returns for the next three years,” said Lorraine Loomis, Swinomish fisheries manager and tribal representative to the Pacific Salmon Commission, which manages the Fraser sockeye run for the United States and Canada.

Last year, fisheries in the United States and Canada were canceled after only 1 million of the forecast 10 million Fraser sockeye returned.

Nine treaty tribes in western Washington have treaty-reserved rights to catch Fraser River sockeye in U.S. waters before they migrate upstream. They are the Jamestown S’Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Lummi, Nooksack, Makah, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Suquamish, Swinomish and Tulalip tribes.

This year, treaty tribal fishermen caught about 1.2 million sockeye, but fell short of their total allocation of the enormous run.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime fishery for many of our fishermen, but we couldn’t catch all of the fish in our allocation,” Loomis said. “After nearly two decades of little to no fishing on Fraser River sockeye, we have lost quite a few of our tribal purse seiners.”

The larger purse seine vessels are the most effective means of catching sockeye, but they are more expensive to operate than smaller gillnet boats.

“The best season I’ve had before this was a third of what I caught this year,” said Lummi fisherman Carl Lane. Lane has relied on crab and chum fishing during slow sockeye years to keep his purse seiner Marathon in operation.

“I’ve never seen this kind of fish in my life,” he added. “I don’t expect we’ll ever see anything like this again.”

A cautious conservation management approach to the fishery also contributed to the tribes’ not harvesting their full share. The returning sockeye were running about a week later than expected, and it took several days to gauge the enormity of the run. By that time, the window of harvest opportunity for the tribes was reduced.

The late timing was compounded by the run’s diversion rate. Sockeye that migrate along the west coast of Vancouver Island are harvested by treaty tribal and non-Indian fishermen in western Washington. Fish returning along the east coast of the island are harvested primarily by Canadian fishermen.

Early in the season, most of the sockeye returned to the Fraser River via the west coast of Vancouver Island, but by the time fisheries managers were certain of the run’s magnitude, most of the fish had diverted through Johnstone Strait on the east coast.

Another hindrance was the time it took to unload boats at fish processing plants.

“The fish processors were overloaded,” Loomis said. “It took a lot of time to unload the sockeye, which meant less time for fishing.”

Treaty tribal fishermen haven’t caught more than 1 million sockeye since 1993. In 2007, the catch was fewer than 6,000 fish. In 2008, there was a federal declaration of a fisheries disaster, and Fraser sockeye tribes and state commercial fishermen were allocated $2 million to compensate for the loss of income.

— K. Neumeyer
The event was the culmination of a week-long celebration of the 2010 Tribal Canoe Journey in July. Eighty-six canoes from tribes in the United States, Canada and a few other countries traveled to the Makah reservation at Neah Bay.

The Makah Tribe has always been a whaling people, and on this night, the tribe reminded those in attendance that they still are. “We have not forgotten,” said Michael Lawrence, Makah tribal chairman. “We are continuing that course to have our treaty right honored.”

Once the massive wood and fabric whale was wheeled into the performance space, tribal members called for the dancers to come out. The whale’s tail and pectoral fins moved, the eyes rolled, and from the blow hole, a white mist jetted toward the ceiling. As the crowd roared its approval, the whale’s mouth opened and one by one, dancers emerged in wolf masks and regalia.

Eleven years ago, the tribe harvested its first gray whale in nearly a century, resurrecting a cultural cornerstone and celebrating a treaty-protected right. Since that time, the tribe has fought to overcome a federal ruling preventing them from whaling, by pursuing a lengthy process to receive an exemption from the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The whale puppet was similar to the one that the
Swadabs Park Prepared for 2011 Journey

Steve Hinton, restoration director for the Skagit River System Cooperative (SRSC), and ecologist Nora Kammer oversee improvements to Swadabs Park. The SRSC is the natural resources arm of the Swinomish and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes.

During next summer’s Paddle to Swinomish, canoes will glide ashore onto a community beach that was created this summer in connection with a marsh restoration project.

The project is an expansion of Swadabs Park on the Swinomish Reservation. The tribe removed some of the spoils that were dumped on the reservation when the Swinomish Channel was dredged 70 years ago. The spoils are being repurposed to cover and protect an archeologically sensitive area and create a recreational community beach.

The excavation returns flooding to the marsh, allowing unrestricted movement of sediment, nutrients and fish. The Swinomish Channel is an estuarine corridor connecting Padilla Bay to Skagit Bay, where salmon habitat is limited.

In addition to restoring 3.3 acres of tidal salt marsh habitat, the tribe created a curved soft shore landing site for canoes and kayaks, which will be the focal point of the 2011 Tribal Canoe Journey, to be hosted by the Swinomish Tribe.

Swadabs is the Lushootseed language name for the Swinomish Tribe. Eventually, the Swadabs Park beach project will include features such as restrooms, interpretive trails and a picnic shelter. – K. Neumeyer

Makah performed with more than six decades ago.

“Maria Pascua brought up that bit of history at one of our early Canoe Journey planning meetings and the community embraced the idea,” McCarty said. His great-grandfather, John, was one of the last dancers to come from that whale many years ago.

The Canoe Journey occurred during a difficult time for the Makah. The tribe has lost a number of elders in the past year.

Among them was Luke William “Turk” Markishtum III, 74, who passed away the morning the canoes arrived.

“There was a lot of pride in the fact that we have held on to what those elders and their ancestors believed was important,” Lawrence said.

For hours, a large group of tribal members danced and sang for the hundreds in the audience. Many of the Makah singers and dancers wore whale-themed regalia. At times, there wasn’t enough room for all the dancers.

“It was so exciting to see so many people participating. It really brought us all together,” Lawrence said.

The Tribal Canoe Journey will be hosted by the Swinomish Tribe in 2011. – D. Preston

For more photos from this year’s journey, go to http://go.nwifc.org/canoejourney.
The Squaxin Island Tribe is building two miniature models of Oakland Bay to understand persistent pollution in the vital Puget Sound shellfish growing area.

The tribe is trying to learn more about harmful bacteria from failing septic systems and livestock manure that may become trapped on top of tideland sediments in upper Oakland Bay.

“We think that instead of dying off like they usually do, the bacteria are surviving and amplifying the pollution, particularly during the summer months,” said John Konovsky, Squaxin Island Tribe’s environmental program manager.

“In a lab, we can recreate similar environmental conditions and track what the bacteria are doing more precisely,” he said.

Fecal coliform bacteria come from human and animal waste, and can’t usually survive long in salt water. But if bacteria become trapped on nutrient-rich sediment particles, they may undergo a physiological reaction that enables their survival, he said.

Tribal researchers are collecting polluted sediment from the bay for use in two 40-gallon aquariums. Twenty-four cups filled with sediment from the tidelands will be subject to conditions similar to the bay. Twice a day, water levels in the aquariums will rise and fall like the tides in Oakland Bay. The “tide” gradually will expose one set of cups, then the other.

“By recreating every aspect of the bay that would impact the bacteria, down to the temperature, sunlight and water quality, we hope we can get a better idea of how well these bacteria survive,” Konovsky said.

— E. O’Connell

Seeking Rare Native Olympia Oysters

The Squaxin Island Tribe is spreading oyster shells on a handful of intertidal beaches in a hunt for the offspring of a tiny, rare native oyster. This fall, tribal researchers will come back to see if any young Olympia oysters have attached themselves to the shells.

Like other shellfish, Olympia oysters are broadcast spawners. Young oysters float on the tide until they settle on a hard surface such as an old oyster shell.

“There are a handful of areas on the island with small populations of Olympias, but we want to see where the oysters are spreading their seed,” said Eric Sparkman, the tribe’s shellfish biologist. “Hopefully, we’ll find the beginnings of good natural production in some areas, meaning we can come back, expand our efforts and possibly kickstart a self-sustaining population out here.”

Olympia oysters are the only oyster native to Puget Sound and were a mainstay in the Squaxin tribal diet until they largely disappeared almost 100 years ago because of pollution and competition from invasive shellfish species.

“We have always depended on Olympia oysters,” said Andy Whitener, the tribe’s natural resources director. “They are an important food source.”

— E. O’Connell

Above: Squaxin Island Tribe’s John Konovsky and Rob Zisette of Herrera Environmental Consultants observe a bacteria tank. Left: Scientists are studying how small cups filled with Oakland Bay sediment react during summer months.
**Bringing Out the Jr. Scientist**

If children can envision themselves as scientists, they are more likely to become one of them.

That was the premise of the week-long Quinault Jr. Scientist Marine Day Camp held at the Quinault Indian Nation’s (QIN) Taholah School this summer. The camp uses the marine environment surrounding the lives of coastal tribal children to help spark enthusiasm for science.

Using real-world science techniques, the campers learned to identify phytoplankton, tidepool species and make a plankton collection net out of pantyhose. Art factored in as well as students created T-shirts with their favorite ocean phytoplankton on it. The camp was sponsored by the QIN, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration outreach grant and a National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences grant.

“It’s fun. We learned the foam stuff on the water is actually algae and some cause harmful algae blooms,” said Olivia Rose, 13. “I’m learning about creatures I didn’t know about.”

Jonnette Bastian-James, QIN tribal member and harmful algal bloom specialist, spent several days showing the students how she collects water samples and counts the algae as part of her job.

Identifying and counting the different types of algae allows her to see if a harmful algal bloom is in progress. Some phytoplankton cause toxins in shellfish that can make them too toxic for humans to eat.

“I was really impressed with how quickly the kids picked up on the different kinds of phytoplankton,” Bastian-James said. “Hopefully, we planted a seed in their minds and encouraged them to go to school and want to become a scientist someday.” – D. Preston

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**Reclaiming Habitat From Knotweed**

Ten-foot-tall stalks of invading knotweed tower over the heads of the Quileute Tribe’s fisheries crew as they walk through the dry side channels of the Bogachiel River system. The four men smile grimly as they spray the knotweed with blue-tinged herbicide. They know they will be back next year and for several years after that to monitor and prevent against re-infestation.

“It seems like we have been doing this knotweed treatment forever, but we are seeing good results,” said Frank Geyer, Timber/Fish/Wildlife biologist for the Quileute Tribe.

“We’re getting positive feedback from people who use the river as well as seeing animals come back to use these riparian areas now that the knotweed has been removed.”

Tribes across the North Olympic Peninsula have worked in partnership with counties, state and local agencies, and individual landowners to keep the river systems from becoming knotweed- and alder-dominated ecosystems with little to offer fish and wildlife. – D. Preston
Antlerless deer harvest has been halted or curtailed by several coastal treaty Indian tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to bolster black-tail deer populations over a large swath of the Olympic Peninsula in Clallam and Jefferson counties.

Death claimed nearly three-quarters of 126 radio-collared fawns tracked during the first three years of a four-year study by the Makah Tribe. The young deer were followed as they moved through Makah reservation lands and private timberlands. Biologists believe the Olympic Peninsula black-tail deer population is declining.

Most of the fawns died from predation by cougars and bobcats, combined with poor body condition caused by hair loss syndrome, which is caused by non-native lice. While hair loss syndrome doesn’t kill deer outright, it makes the animal more susceptible to pneumonia. The incessant licking and scratching caused by the lice prevents the animal from feeding well and distracts its attention from predators.

“Harvest is something we can control,” said Rob McCoy, wildlife division manager for the Makah Tribe. “We don’t have the capability to accomplish predator control at this time and we can’t control the hair loss disease. This is the best way to maximize adult doe survival and increase the number of offspring.”

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Tulalip Provides Harvest Opportunities with Wild Turkeys

About 170 wild turkeys were released into a meadow on the Tulalip Tribes reservation in August with the hope they will sustain a harvestable population.

“Tribal hunters don’t have the same access to nutritious protein that they once had,” said Ray Fryberg Sr., fish and wildlife director for the Tulalip Tribes. “Populations of deer and elk have declined and they’re running out of decent habitat.”

A few years ago, the tribes’ natural resources department started planting meadows on the reservation to provide a haven for wildlife. The meadows support populations of deer, small mammals and birds – and now wild turkeys.

“We hope these turkeys will breed successfully and sustain a harvestable population that can feed our community,” Fryberg said. “Having wild turkeys right here on the reservation also could engage tribal youth who haven’t been exposed to our hunting culture.”

The turkey chicks came from a hatchery and were placed in brooding pens in May. Once they were old enough, they were moved to a net-covered enclosure in the meadow to get used to eating the grasses there.

When the nets were removed in August, the turkeys needed some encouragement to flee the coop. After a few minutes, they started exploring the grasses surrounding the enclosure.

“Every step of the way, I have been really impressed with their development,” said Tulalip wildlife manager Mike Sevigny. “I expect them to breed this spring, and if they do, we could issue a few hunting tags next fall.” – K. Neumeyer

Tulalip Tribes wildlife technician Amanda Shelton ushers young turkeys out of their pen.

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Makah Assesses Elk Calf, Bull Populations

Accurately estimating elk populations is necessary to properly manage harvest rates. For the Makah Tribe, that means consistent monitoring of the herds within traditional hunting areas on the North Olympic Peninsula.

“The capacity of any one area to support elk is really variable depending on a number of factors, including the food available to them, harvest rate and road density,” said Shannon Murphy, the tribe’s wildlife biologist.

The tribe is in the process of updating the information it has collected on the elk herds in traditional hunting areas, including tracking 40 elk calves with radio collars to note mortality rates and the cause. This helps answer the question of whether calf survival is balancing cow mortality.

Elk forage is abundant on the Olympic Peninsula, but the nutritional content is so low that cow elk typically have a calf every other year. Knowing cow and calf survival rates is a cornerstone of understanding the size and health of the elk herds. The tribe has not harvested cow elk since 1997.

Harvest rates will continue to be measured using information turned in by hunters and from tracking the radio-collared calves and 100 radio-collared cows. The tribe also implanted 20 bull elk with an internal radio tracking device. The internal device will help maintain the scientific accuracy of the harvest rate.

“We don’t want a hunter choosing or not choosing an animal to harvest because of a radio collar,” Murphy said.

“We want enough information to support management decisions and make sure we are meeting Peninsula herd management goals,” said Rob McCoy, wildlife division manager.

– D. Preston

Finally – An Afternoon Flight

Tulalip Tribes natural resources staff members rescued an injured bald eagle from Potlatch Beach in June. It was soaking wet and was not able to fly. The eagle was taken to Sarvey Wildlife Care Center, where it was rehabilitated before being released into a wildlife area in Everett.

Veterinarian Dr. Briggs Hall gives antibiotics and obtains a blood sample from a tranquilized bull elk following the insertion of an internal radio transmitting device as part of the Makah Tribe’s efforts to update elk population data in traditional hunting areas.
Tulalip Tribes: Pipeline Will Meet Water Needs

Water is the lifeblood of our mother earth. Without water, we can’t do anything. Water is important for cultural, subsistence, recreational and economic uses. Water is the key to everything we do as people.

The Tulalip reservation now gets its water from wells that tap into aquifers, plus 4 million gallons a day that are piped in from Marysville. At our current rate of development, we will run out of water in five years.

Aquifers are fed by rainwater and water levels in these underground rivers are declining. As our groundwater diminishes, the reduced stream flow has a negative effect on our salmon hatchery system. We also can’t provide housing or economic development without access to water.

We need to bring in water from other sources via a pipeline that will meet our future needs. The Tulalip Tribes and city of Everett have partnered to build this pipeline.

A few years ago, when the tribes reached a settlement for fish damages between 1918 and 1960 from the city’s diversion dams on the Sultan River, we asked for our payment to be made in water, along with $5 million to help pay for design and construction of a pipeline to the reservation. As part of that settlement, we will have available an average of 30 million gallons a day with a peak flow of 36 million gallons a day.

We also negotiated a settlement with the Snohomish County Public Utility District (PUD) for fish damages caused by its hydropower dams after 1961. Funds from the settlement can be used to help pay for the pipeline construction.

Snohomish PUD has agreed to work with us in a number of ways, including providing training and job opportunities to tribal members.

The pipeline is being constructed in eight sections with an estimated total cost of $85 million. The first section has been completed and construction on the next one will begin soon. Construction on a third segment should be completed next year. Using some existing pipelines, we hope to have about 2 million gallons a day of water through the new pipeline segments by the end of 2012.

Generations

Members of an Upper Skagit canoe family travel the Skagit River in a traditional dugout river canoe in this photo from the late 1800s.

Cedar canoes were then the main form of transportation from the Upper Skagit valley to Puget Sound. Dugout canoes were carved in a variety of shapes and sizes, depending on the purpose of the journey and the number of people who would be traveling. Ocean canoes tended to be carved from larger trees than river canoes, but as can be seen in this photo, long canoes were needed on the river as well, to accommodate large families.
The Upper Skagit Tribe has ramped up its shellfish program by hiring a new biologist and holding test fisheries for spot prawns. Test fisheries improve harvest management by providing information about population size.

“Expanding our program will help us learn more about shellfish such as shrimp, so we can protect our resources now and for future generations,” said Scott Schuyler, the tribe’s natural resources policy coordinator.

The tribe has been testing the spot prawn population before and after commercial, ceremonial and subsistence fisheries to monitor the impacts of fishing on the stock. Last spring, shellfish biologist Kyle Deerkop and technicians Larry Peterson, Tim Shelton and Robert Schuyler set 100 pots, measuring a sample of the spot prawns and recording their stage of sexual maturity.

Spot prawns have an unusual reproductive cycle. Most mature first as males, and after a couple of breeding seasons, change sex and reproduce for a few seasons as females.

Studies have shown that males sometimes change into females at a younger age or skip the male phase when faced with increased fishing pressure or higher natural mortality. This could be a reproductive strategy to make sure there are enough egg-producing females each season.

“Shellfish have always been crucially important to our culture and way of life,” Schuyler said. “It’s very important for the tribe to continue to gather shellfish as our ancestors did.”

Clam seeding is done by the handful. No machines or digging, just gently tossing the seed on the beach as the tide rolls in.

Staff from the Suquamish and Port Gamble S’Klallam tribes, Point No Point Treaty Council and the U.S. Navy did just that on Indian Island over the course of two weeks this summer. Heavy-duty 15-by-50-foot nets were laid on the beach before the area was hand-seeded with 3.5 million fingernail-sized clam seeds. The nets prevent bird predation.

“This beach has great potential for clam growth,” said Viviane Barry, the Suquamish Tribe’s shellfish management biologist. “Manila clams need a good mix of pea gravel and sand for healthy growth. This area is rich with all those components.”

The clam enhancement project came out of a September 2009 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the U.S. Navy and the Suquamish Tribe.
The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe is continuing its work to prepare for the removal of two dams on the Elwha River with a sediment study and beach seine surveys. The three-year process of removing the fish-blocking Elwha and Glines Canyon dams is scheduled to begin next September. The project will restore salmon access up the river as far as the foothills of the Olympic Mountains, which salmon haven’t reached for nearly 100 years.

The tribe is collecting sediment samples from near the mouth of the river to near Glines Canyon dam, 10 miles upriver. “The whole lower river is filled with large cobble and smaller boulders,” said Lower Elwha Klallam habitat program manager Mike McHenry. “This is not good for salmon spawning habitat – they need a mixture of smaller gravel for egg nests.”

During August, a total of 60 samples were collected at 20 different sites in the reach. Samples will be taken following the removal to assess the changes in spawning habitat for salmon.

“We have been working on such studies with the Elwha Tribe for a decade and see these as a critical part of assessing the benefits of dam removal,” said George Pess, a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Northwest Fisheries Science Center research scientist and project leader.

Along the nearshore of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the tribe and NOAA have been beach seining to learn more about what lives there. “Observing what exists in the nearshore now will help us determine any changes after dam removal,” said Larry Ward, the tribe’s hatchery manager and fisheries biologist.

Fish found this summer included coho, pink and chinook salmon, shiner perch, Pacific sandlance and three-spined sticklebacks. Following the dam removal, the tribe and NOAA will observe the same beaches to see what has changed, including the amount of fish and the variety of species.

The dams are owned by the federal government. The Olympic National Park is spearheading the removal effort. The project to remove the structures and restore the Elwha River ecosystem, estimated at $350 million, is the largest dam removal project to date in the United States. – T. Royal

Standing in the middle of the rushing Elwha river, Lower Elwha Klallam habitat program manager Mike McHenry measures a rock before heaving it back into the water.

Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe hatchery manager Larry Ward, left, and NOAA research fisheries biologist Kurt Fresh pull in a beach seine near Port Williams in Sequim Bay.

Taking Stock of Elwha River

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Woody Debris Slows Water, Restores Creek

This summer, the new streambed for Morse Creek looked like a pinball machine. Logjams were placed in the stream, creating new habitat for juvenile and adult salmon.

“I can see it now, the water coursing through there, bouncing off each jam and the flow going downstream,” said Rebecca Benjamin, executive director of the North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC).

In a few months, the water flowing down the large creek will be using those jams to slow down as it pours from the Olympic Mountains and into the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

The coalition, in partnership with the Lower Elwha Klallam and Jamestown S’Klallam tribes, and other agencies, has been working to restore this short but vital section of Morse Creek.

Recreating the historic streambed involved rebuilding 2,400 feet of water channel and installing 19 engineered log jams. Salmon that use the creek include pink, coho, steelhead and chum.

The half-mile section had been realigned and diked by a property owner in 1939, creating a straight and narrow streambed that damaged salmon habitat in its path.

“It was like an express lane and it took all the good habitat with it,” said Kevin Long, NOSC’s project manager. “There is still good habitat in the historic channel, so all we had to do was realign the creek.” – T. Royal
Stillaguamish Tribe Celebrates Hand-carved Canoe

When a 300-year-old cedar tree, buried for the last 100 years, was uncovered in the Stillaguamish watershed, the Stillaguamish Tribe asked Lummi master carver Felix Solomon to carve a shovel-nose river canoe for them. The Stillaguamish Tribe debuted the canoe during its First Salmon Ceremony in July.

Right: Stillaguamish tribal chairman Shawn Yanity and tribal member Jeff Tatro paddle the canoe they helped carve. Watch the video at http://go.nwifc.org/canoe.

Swinomish Tribe Dedicates Kiket Island

In June, the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission bought Kiket Island to co-manage as a state park. On July 30, representatives from the tribe and state gathered for a dedication ceremony. Watch the video at http://go.nwifc.org/kiket.

Puyallup Tribe Commemorates Fish-Camp Raid

In September, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians marked the anniversary of a historic raid on a fishing camp that sparked the court battle that eventually led to the Boldt decision. Watch the video at http://go.nwifc.org/Puyallup40.

The Suquamish Tribe is working with federal and county agencies to restore a significant part of Chico Creek by removing a fish-blocking culvert at its mouth. The project is one more step in the tribe’s massive restoration effort within the Chico watershed.

Chico Creek is one the largest native salmon-producing creeks in Puget Sound. An average of 30,000 chum spawn in the watershed each year. The tribe partnered with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Kitsap County and the U.S. Navy for the project.

“Property owners teamed up with the tribes in 2009 and 2010 to construct logjams in the 40-foot-wide creek bed, plant western red cedar on the stream banks and remove English ivy. The cedars will eventually fall into the creek, creating natural salmon habitat. The piles of logs help create pools where salmon can feed and rest. “I really want this to be a place where my grandkids can come down and see fish swimming up the creek,” said property owner Paul McBeth, who has been spearheading the effort with his neighbors.”

~ T. Royal

Landowners Join Habitat Effort

The Jamestown S’Klallam and Lower Elwha Klallam tribes are working with McDonald Creek property owners to make the stream more salmon friendly.

Coho and wild steelhead historically have been found in the 13-mile-long creek that runs from the Olympic Mountains into the Strait of Juan de Fuca, just west of Sequim.

Decades of timber harvest, stormwater pouring into the creek, and other land use practices have degraded the quality of the stream. Stable logjams are scarce, allowing gravel that salmon need for spawning to be flushed downstream.

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Estuary Restoration Progresses

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“It will be interesting to see how the channel realigns itself after the estuary is returned to a more natural condition,” said Jay Zischke, the tribe’s marine fisheries manager. “Box culverts such as the ones we are removing are effective for conveying water, but negatively impact the way an estuary should work.”

In the past year alone, the tribe has installed tons of gravel and dozens of rootwads near the mouth of the creek to help slow the water and create pools that salmon need for resting and feeding. ~ T. Royal
Removing dikes around the 214-acre Nalley Island will net a big payoff.

“Restoring Nalley Island back to its original historic condition as part of an estuary will benefit everyone in the area — from our tribal members to the fish and wildlife that use the site for feeding and resting,” said Joseph Pavel, the Skokomish Tribe’s natural resources director.

Work includes removing nearly 3 miles of dikes, filling the ditches, removing tide gates and culverts, replacing power poles and improving access to utility lines.

The island restoration is the second phase of the tribe’s effort to restore the Skokomish River estuary. The first phase was completed in 2007, when dikes west of the island were removed to restore 108 acres of tidelands.

A large portion of the Skokomish estuary was converted from a pristine estuary to Nalley Farm in the late 1930s. At the time, the area was a productive estuary with miles of tidal channels. Dikes and ditches were constructed to prevent tidal and river flows across the surface of the island and permanently drained the area.

The confined river flow prevented aquatic species and salmon from accessing the wetlands where fish rear and take refuge during storm events.

Endangered Species Act-listed salmon and other fish in the Skokomish Watershed are expected to benefit from the restored habitat. The project will also enhance habitat for birds and other wildlife. – T. Royal

Dike Breached to Restore Estuary on Nalley Island

An excavator removes dikes on Nalley Island, which will allow historic salt marsh habitat and channel networks to return.
The Nisqually Indian Tribe is donating nearly 200 large trees from its reservation to the Mashel River logjam project this fall.

“The trees were danger trees that we selectively removed from our reservation neighborhoods because they could fall during windstorms,” said James Slape Jr., a tribal council member. Trees from land targeted for a new public safety complex also are being used in the project.

“Trees like this are hard and expensive to come by,” said David Troutt, the tribe’s natural resources director.

In addition to the Mashel River, the tribe also has restored hundreds of acres of the Nisqually estuary.

“Lack of high-quality habitat is the main factor in declining salmon populations on the Nisqually River,” Troutt said.

“Restoring and protecting salmon habitat is a major goal for the tribe,” Slape said. “We fish for these salmon, so we want them to survive in the future.” – E. O’Connell

For a second year, the Nisqually Indian Tribe will build logjams in the Mashel River that will provide habitat for fish and help protect property from bank erosion. Riverside property sustained heavy damage during a historic flood two years ago.

“When there isn’t enough wood in a river, both people and salmon are in danger because the water flows too quickly during floods,” said David Troutt, the tribe’s natural resources director.

Last year, the tribe completed a series of logjams along the town of Eatonville’s Millpond Park that restored habitat while preventing the river from washing out the historic site.

“Strong salmon runs are vital to the Nisqually Tribe and we take environmental stewardship seriously,” said Cynthia Iyall, chair of the Nisqually Tribe. “We also want our neighbors to be safe, and we’re happy we can make both things happen. Strong communities can balance protecting personal property and environmental protection.”

This year, the tribe is expanding the project to private property downstream where a 400-by-60-foot piece of property was lost to a flood two winters ago.

“The logjams that we’re building will divert flow away from the at-risk property and into a side channel,” Troutt said.

Next summer, the state Department of Transportation (DOT) will further protect the eroding bank using a technique called “bank roughening” – replacing traditional riprap with log structures.

An earlier tribal project on the Mashel replaced a large rock berm protecting Eatonville’s Smallwood Park with a series of large logjams.

“We’ve seen direct evidence that the logjams we’ve built in the last few years not only blunt the impacts of floods, but also boost juvenile salmon populations,” Troutt said. “Since we built those logjams at Smallwood, two significant floods have battered them and they’ve survived.”

At the same time, surveys have found a booming juvenile coho population around the jams.

“Our biologists found more than 2,500 coho living in the same part of the Mashel, up from around 900 before the logjams,” Troutt said. “These fish are finding the river a much better place to be now.”

In addition to coho salmon, the logjams are also expected to benefit Puget Sound chinook and steelhead, both of which are listed as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act. – E. O’Connell
Chester “Chet” Cayou Sr., Qw-Tee-Sa-Luq, passed away Aug. 27 at 88 years old.

Cayou was the oldest surviving male tribal member and the longest serving member of the Swinomish Indian Senate. During his 27 years as senator, he served as chair of the fisheries and veterans committees. He was also a longtime member of the budget and personnel committees.

Cayou proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He arrived at Normandy Beach shortly after D-Day and served for six months in the occupation of Berlin after the war ended. He also was present at the Battle of the Bulge.

He was a member of Swinomish Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Swinomish Smokehouse.

Cayou is survived by his sons Chester Cayou Jr. and Dale Jones; daughters Tina Cayou, Regina Bob, Ina Cayou and Sophie Bailey; sister Susan Billy; and numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Velma; sons Fred and Donnie; grandchildren Wayne Bob Jr., Cassandra Cayou and Curtis Bailey; parents General Scott and Sarah Cayou; and two brothers.

Makah tribal member Luke William “Turk” Markishtum III, passed away in Neah Bay July 19, where he had gathered with family and friends to celebrate the Makah Tribal Canoe Journey.

He was born November 28, 1935 in Neah Bay to Luke and Violet Markishtum.

Turk graduated from Neah Bay High School in 1954 and received an athletic scholarship for football to attend the University of Washington.

He owned the Big Salmon Fishing Marina in Neah Bay from the late 1960s through the early 1980s, and was also a commercial fisherman. He had also a long teaching and coaching career in schools in Port Angeles, North Kitsap and the American Indian Heritage School in Seattle. He was a social worker with Washington State DSHS Child Protective Services, Indian Child Welfare Native American Unit, and served as the Tribal Liaison for the North Kitsap School District with the Port Gamble and Suquamish tribes.

Turk is survived by his sister, Eleanor “Beebs”; his children, Terry, Stanley Sr. (Celina), Debbie, Dean, Amy, Emma and adopted daughter Boo; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Turk was preceded in death by his parents, Luke and Violet Markishtum, sister Deanna and brother Myron.

John Arum, 49, attorney for many western Washington tribes, died in an apparent climbing accident in North Cascades National Park the week of Sept. 1.

Arum was born in 1961 in New York City to Bob and Barbara Arum. He attended Reed College and the University of Washington Law School. He married Susan Hormann in 1999.

Arum worked on the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court case that affirmed the hunting and fishing rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa in Minnesota. Arum also worked for the Makah Tribe for more than 20 years on treaty whaling and fishing rights issues. He worked tirelessly on many environmental issues, including helping preserve Loomis Forest in eastern Washington. He was a board member on the Washington Environmental Council.

He is survived by Hormann; his mother, Barbara Arum; father, Robert, and stepmother, Lovie Arum; his brother Richard, sister Lizabeth Arum, stepbrother Todd DuBoeff and stepsister Dena DuBoeff.