

**Comments to Governors Edition  
of  
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Report**



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*The Lummi People have lived by the sea and from the sea for thousands of years. The value of the water as a source of food, transportation and even our existence is constantly on our minds. Totally reliant on the water around us, the Lummi Nation has continued to place the highest value on traditions that involve the oceans. The identity of the Lummi People as a distinct group has depended on our relationship to the sea. In reality all Northwest Natives are tied to the oceans with inseparable bonds and permanent relationships.*

*In 1855 our Treaties were written around natural resources that guaranteed to us we would have a continued use and responsibility to those waters.*

Specifically, the Treaties granted to the Lummi People 50 percent of natural resources and those rights were later affirmed by Judicial decisions, the Lummi People felt secure. In those early days of the Treaty, Lummi People totally relied on the waters that surrounded them. Today that reliance has been reduced by changes in the waters, views of management, pressures of population and what appears to be climate changes. However our values continue to be directed at the sea and maintenance of our rights. They all point to the reality that we must all be better stewards of the sea and its resources.

The Lummi People have had minimal input into the development of the Ocean Policy

Document now presented and represented by the more than 1000 pages of actions, recommendations, testimonials and background. **In reality the Lummi Nation and other coastal Tribes have a very large presence in these issues.** The Lummi Nation reacts daily to issues that impact the environment, their jobs, Puget Sound and the connecting Pacific Ocean and their existence. We continue to place emphasis on aspects of our water-oriented background, including our diminishing fishing fleet, shellfish harvests, cultural needs, and successful aquaculture program. The Aquaculture Project beginning in 1969, was a vision of continued reliance on the water and tidelands. Today after 35 years, the fish and shellfish aspects of that project continue to supply valuable jobs and income to the Tribe and a gateway to aquaculture potential through Northwest Indian College programs.

The roots of the Tribally owned community college at Lummi, the Northwest Indian College (NWIC), actually started in 1969 as an Aquaculture Training Program, a collaborative effort by the Federal government, the State government and the Lummi Nation. The College continues today as Northwest Indian College, with a native enrollment of more than 1600 students from throughout the United States. In 1999 the College was designated as the location for the **National Indian Center for Marine Environmental Research and Education (NICMERE)**. The College was chosen for this center as it is the only Native college located on marine waters and the only college with a marine program that works collaboratively with the Lummi Aquaculture program in research, technical training and educational opportunity. The thirty-five member American Indian Higher Education Consortium of Colleges and Universities recognized the unique position of the Northwest Indian College and designed NWIC and NICMERE as the Center for marine studies for that group. Presidential Executive Orders for American Indians and Alaska Natives Education opportunities also direct collaborative efforts to be developed and enhance the capacity of Tribal Governments to provide education opportunities. NWIC and NICMERE also provide a resource for Puget Sound Tribes and West Coast Tribes for educational opportunities at a Native institution.

NICMERE's strategic plan was developed to provide a larger presence of Native scientists in the management of natural resources, including all the marine sciences. Through the use of grants, NICMERE is providing research efforts that are contributing to the marine community. As a 1994 Land Grant College, Northwest Indian College can participate in Sea Grant programs and provide additional input to the marine environment through Native-oriented research efforts. NICMERE has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Commerce (NOAA, NMFS, Northwest Fisheries Science Center) to collaborate and provide the college with cutting edge technology from their staffs and facilities for students and faculty in the ocean sciences. Native American Tribes benefit from such an endeavor by pooling their efforts in science projects.

Lummi Nation has a vision of incorporation of ocean studies in their K-12 programs that includes a new high school. Early high school development of an ocean program will insure the higher education aspects of the water oriented community will be provided with people that can relate to the water through Indian eyes.

Our request at this point is to insure that Native interests are recognized by any plan or policy proposed by the Federal, State and local governments for marine waters on a government to government basis. Lummi has been developing facilities that can make such a plan successful by including us in the groundwork of this plan. NICMERE is a perfect vehicle to disseminate and collect information regarding the inclusion of the Native groups and Tribes that will be directly impacted by the National Ocean Policy Report.

Funding of facilities for The Northwest Indian College and NICMERE will insure the aspects of this program are available to all Natives and provide an education basis and proven science that will enable Natives to participate in research and education and will guarantee protection of our resources and full use of our waters for all people.

Examples of funding to enhance Native input in the marine sciences, aquaculture and fisheries management include:

- Marine Science Research and Education Center (NICMERE) at Northwest Indian College
- Permanent staff for research and education (NICMERE)
- Education and research equipment needed for full participation in the ocean efforts of management and conservation
- Enhancement of Aquaculture facilities
- K-12 ocean science program
- Fishermen assistance in catch/value added products
- Transfer of aquaculture techniques to fishermen (mussels, clams, oysters, fish rearing techniques)
- Innovative habitat restoration projects involving the community
- Community education programs on individual and collective efforts for pollution control
- Tribal tourism, land management, forestry
- Salmon issues, ESA policies, including ocean survival
- Shellfish disease and propagation
- Hatchery reform and use to insure fish enhancement meets the needs of Tribal fishermen
- Mass marking techniques

Lummi Nation and Northwest Indian College appreciates the opportunity to provide input into the U. S. Commission for Ocean Policy. Development of a policy that includes grass roots participation in every area of the oceans use, conservation and development will help insure success.

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