

# The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

Serving The Treaty Indian Tribes In  
Western Washington



# Indian Tribes Have Always Inhabited the Watersheds of Western Washington

Their Cultures are Based on Harvesting

- Fish,
- Wildlife,
- And other natural resources in the region







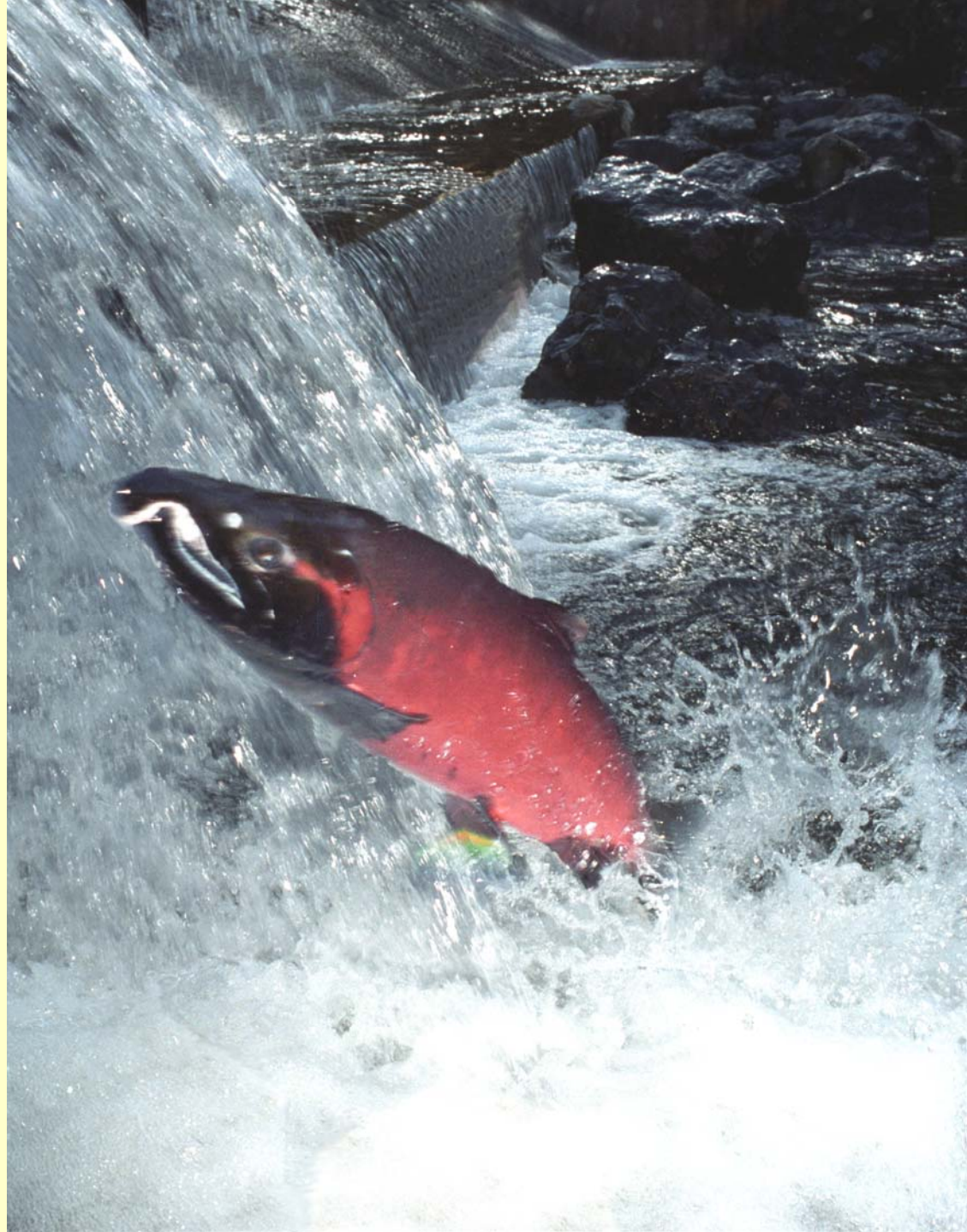
# Western Washington Treaty Tribes







Salmon are  
important to  
tribes both  
culturally and  
economically







Quileute Tribe celebrating the First Salmon,  
a centuries-old tradition common to all  
“Salmon People”





Tribal fisherman on the Hoh River



Though always used  
by tribes, crab and  
other shellfish  
species have  
become increasingly  
important to tribal  
economies







Quinault tribal member harvesting razor  
clams





Hunting has always helped sustain tribes





Skokomish Tribe  
beach seining –  
allowing live  
release of non-  
targeted species  
such as chinook,  
listed as  
threatened under  
the Endangered  
Species Act



Unloading  
halibut, one  
of a variety  
of groundfish  
utilized by  
tribes for  
thousands of  
years





In the Mid-1850's, a Series of Treaties  
Were Negotiated With Tribes In the  
Region. In Exchange For Giving Up Most  
of Their Land, Tribes Reserved Certain  
Rights to Protect Their Way of Life

“The right of taking fish at usual and  
accustomed grounds and stations is further  
secured to said Indians...together with the  
privilege of hunting and gathering roots and  
berries on open and unclaimed lands.”

– Treaty of Point Elliott 1855



In the decades that followed, the promises of the treaties were quickly broken as the tribes were denied their treaty-reserved rights by the State of Washington.

The struggle for recognition of these climaxed in the “Fish Wars” of the late 1960s and 1970s, when tribal members were arrested and jailed for fishing in defiance of state law.















In 1974, the federal court reaffirmed the tribes treaty protected fishing rights. U.S. v. Washington (The Boldt Decision) has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court, establishing the tribes as co-managers of the resource.



# As Co-managers, Tribes:

- Are entitled to 50 percent of the harvestable number of salmon returning to Washington waters
- Created the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) to assist them in conducting orderly and biologically sound fisheries





# More Recent Federal Court Rulings Have:

- Upheld treaty-reserved shellfish harvest rights
- Further expanded the role and responsibilities of the tribes as natural resource managers



The tribal commitment to wise natural resource management is clearly evident in the preamble to the NWFIC Constitution



“We the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, recognize that our fisheries are a basic and important natural resource and of vital concern to the Indians of this state, and that the conservation of this natural resource is dependent upon effective and progressive management. We further believe that by unity of action, we can best accomplish these things, not only for the benefit of our own people but for all of the people of the Pacific Northwest.”

# NWIFC Member Tribes Are:

- Lummi
- Nooksack
- Swinomish
- Upper Skagit
- Sauk-Suiattle
- Stillaguamish
- Tulalip
- Muckleshoot
- Puyallup
- Nisqually
- Squaxin Island
- Skokomish
- Suquamish
- Port Gamble S'Klallam
- Jamestown S'Klallam
- Lower Elwha Klallam
- Makah
- Quileute
- Quinault



The NWIFC is governed by its member tribes. Commissioners, representatives from each tribe, develop policy to guide the organization. Commissioners elect a chairman, vice-chairman and treasurer.

The commission's executive director supervises NWIFC staff in the implementation of the policies and natural resource management activities approved by the commissioners.

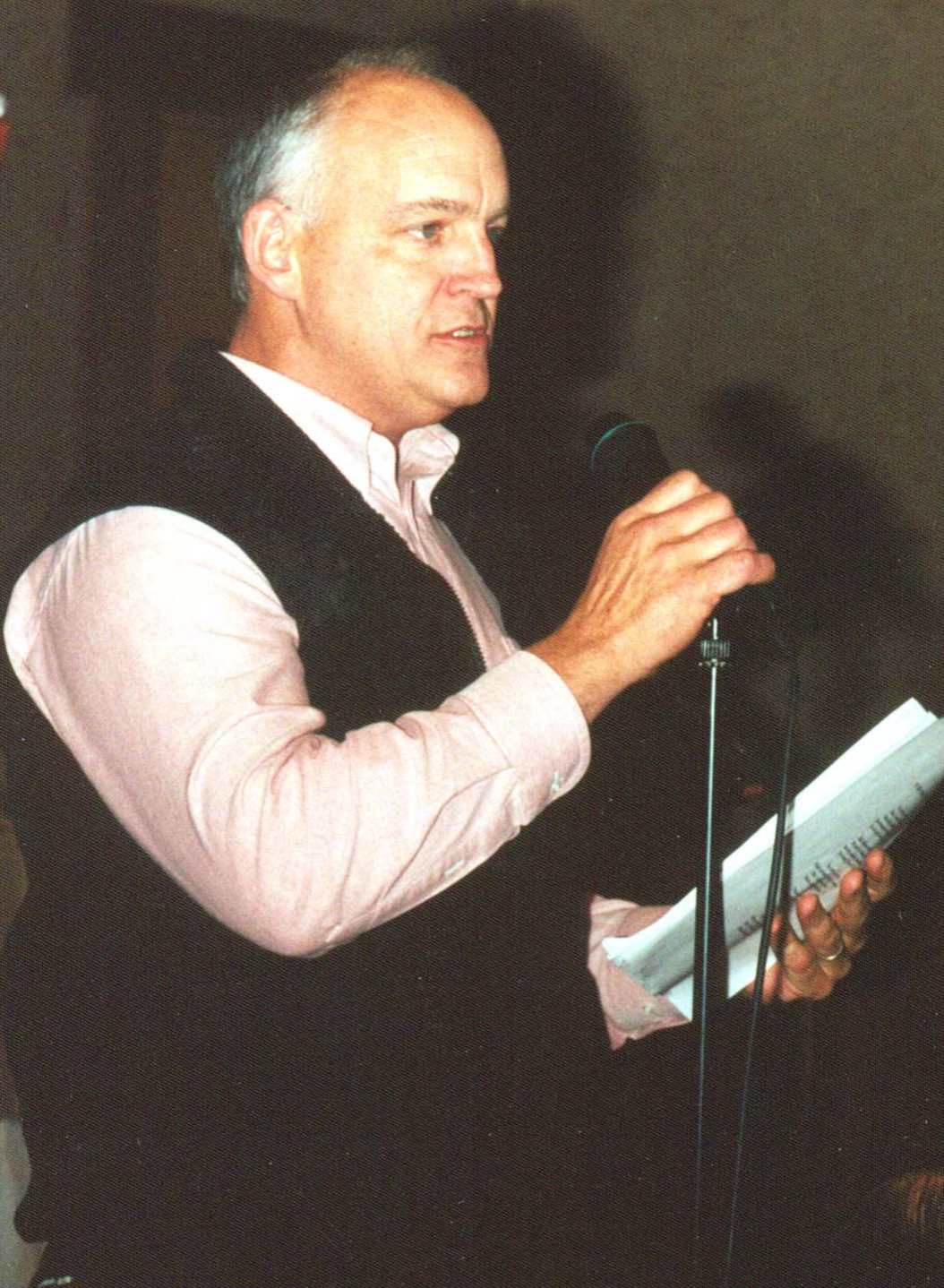


NWIFC  
Chairman  
Nisqually  
tribal  
member  
Billy Frank Jr.





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NWIFC

Executive Director

Jim Anderson



The NWIFC is primarily a support service organization that provides direct services to its member tribes to assist them in their natural resource management efforts.

The NWIFC employs approximately 70 full-time staff members to provide services to member tribes. This enables tribes to efficiently use the limited federal funding provided for their natural resource management activities.



# Headquartered In Olympia, Wash., NWIFC Has Satellite Offices In:

- Forks
- Mt. Vernon

# NWIFC Is Composed of Four Divisions:

1. Administration
2. Fisheries Services
3. Habitat Services
4. Information and Education Services



# 1. Administration Division Includes:

- Executive Director
- Human Resources
- Policy Analysts
- Clerical
- Accounting
- Wildlife Management

NWIFC Wildlife  
Biologist Chris  
Madsen releases  
an elk calf as part  
of an effort to  
improve elk  
populations  
in the  
Mt. St. Helens  
area





## 2. The Fishery Services Division Is Composed of:

- A. Fishery Management and Planning Division
- B. Quantitative Services Division
- C. Enhancement Services Division

# A. Fishery Management and Planning Division:

- Provides technical assistance and coordination to tribes in the development and implementation of annual and long-range fishery plans
- Assists tribes in implementation of the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty
- Provides coordination of tribal participation in the implementation efforts to protect several salmon stocks listed as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act



The NWIFC  
conducts the  
South Sound  
chum test fishery  
providing critical  
update  
information about  
the run size



## B. The Quantitative Services Division Provides:

- Quantitative analysis tools and technical consulting to aid tribes in their natural resource management activities
- Administration of the Treaty Indian Catch Monitoring Program – a database of harvest statistics critical for fishery management planning and harvest allocation



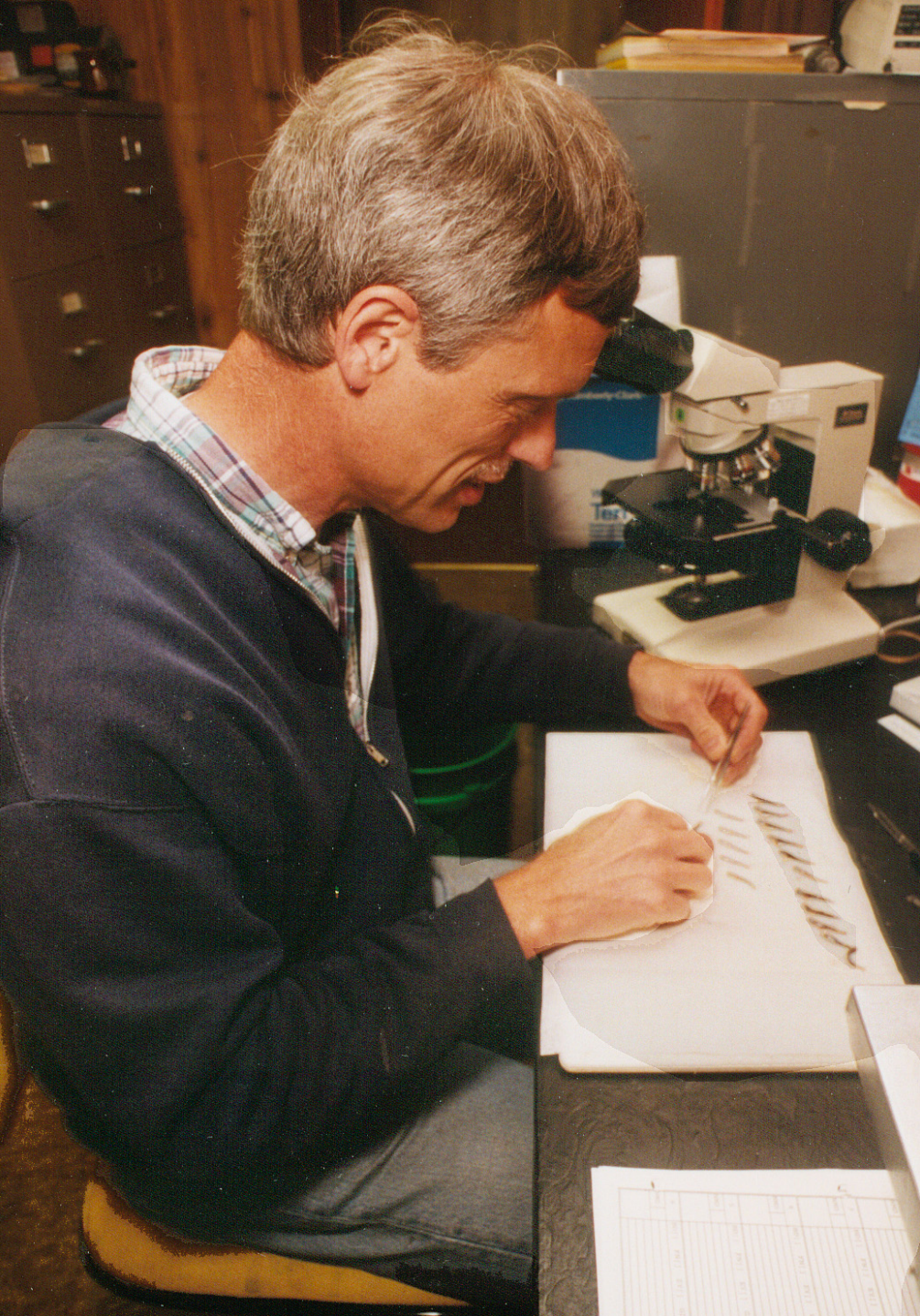


Data collected by tribes shows how many young salmon leave streams and is used by the NWIFC to create models projecting salmon returns

## C. The Enhancement Division Provides:

- Coordination of tribal hatchery programs such as coded wire tagging programs
- Fish health programs
- Training to tribal hatchery staff





NWIFC Fish  
Pathologist Craig  
Olson checks  
hatchery fish for  
diseases at a tribal  
fish hatchery

## 3. Habitat Services Division

- Provides technical coordination and policy development assistance to member tribes on issues affecting fish habitat and other environmental issues
- Coordinates tribal participation in forest management processes
- Conducts a statewide tribal water quality program
- Conducts a joint salmon habitat inventory and assessment project with the WDFW



Back  
to division list





NWIFC stream survey  
and habitat assessment  
training



# 4. Information and Education Services Division

- Is the public relations arm of the NWIFC. The division conducts a comprehensive internal and external communications program to inform member tribes, agencies and the public about natural resource management activities of tribes
- Responds to information requests from agencies, organizations and the public
- Produces a variety of publications, including the quarterly NWIFC News magazine, as well as videos and exhibits





*Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission*

**NEWS**



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Inside:

- Dungeness Cooperation Pays Off
- Understanding Drought, Wetlands
- Protecting Marbled Murrelets
- Log Jams Enhance Habitat
- Study Helps Mountain Goats
- Small Streams Still Important

The NWIFC  
News is  
distributed to  
nearly 11,000  
subscribers,  
including U.S.  
congressional  
members, media,  
organizations  
and individuals

The interconnectedness of all natural resources in the State of Washington means that tribal participation is necessary in nearly all aspects of natural resource management



The Northwest Indian Fisheries  
Commission will continue to  
evolve to support tribal goals in  
natural resources management

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[www.nwifc.org](http://www.nwifc.org)