

# Skokomish Indian Tribe, Shelton, Washington

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## NEAI Projects\*

Year	Applicant	Project	Funding Source**	Amount
1995	Skokomish Indian Tribe	Scabob Creek Restoration Jobs-in-the-Woods (JITW)		\$417,877
1995		Bioengineering (JITW)	BIA	97,008
1995		Skokomish River (JITW)	BIA	46,513
1996		US Hwy 101 Retail Corridor	CTED/WDN	23,137
1997		Jobs-in-the-Woods	BIA	197,617
1997		Land Acquisition and Reservation Strategic Development Plan	USFS-RCA	15,000
1998		Skokomish Farm Market (Land purchase and remodel)	RDA-RBEG	124,250
1999		Skokomish-Nalley Slough (JITW)	BIA	191,735
1999		Skokomish Sewage Treatment Plant (Hydrogeological Study)	USFS-RCA	6,560
2000		Skokomish Farm Market (Cost Overruns)	USFS-RCA	49,874

\* Project funding reflects initial loan and grant totals. Final funding amounts may be different.

\*\* Key to Funding Sources: BIA = Bureau of Indian Affairs, RCA=Rural Community Assistance Program; USFS=U.S. Forest Service, CTED/WDN = Community, Trade, and Economic Development/Washington Development Network.

## Background Context

### Brief History

The Skokomish were originally one of at least nine separate Twana communities that lived along Hood Canal on the eastern side of the Olympic Peninsula. The Skokomish (meaning “people of the river”) lived along the Skokomish River and its north fork. They were united with other bands in the area by the Twana language, a common territory, and a similar culture. The Twana territory included portions of what are now Jefferson, Mason, and Kitsap Counties in Washington state.

White settlement in the area began in the 1800s, and in 1853, Washington became a United States ter-

ritory. The governor of the new territory, Isaac Stevens, began to negotiate treaties for Indian land and rights.<sup>1</sup> In 1855, the Skokomish reluctantly signed the Treaty of Point-No-Point with the U.S. Government, along with the S’Klallam, Toonahooch, and Chemakum Tribes. The Treaty ceded all rights and title of tribal lands to the U.S. government in exchange for \$53,383, reservation land, and the right to continue fishing, hunting, and gathering on traditional lands (Shelton-Mason County Journal 1976). A 3,840-acre reservation (later increased by 1,373 acres in 1874) was established on Hood Canal at the mouth of the Skokomish River, about 20 miles north of the city of

1. Under constitutional law, native peoples were granted legal status to their land under “prior occupancy.” The Oregon Territorial Act of 1848 guaranteed property rights to Indians unless extinguished by treaty with the U.S. As land increasingly became a commodity, pressure to open up land to white settlers increased. Congress thus authorized the negotiation of treaties with native people in an effort to extinguish their claims to land.

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Shelton in Mason County, Washington. Although the reservation included areas that were already inhabited by members of the Skokomish community, people from other communities along Hood Canal were relocated (often by force) to the reservation. The Twana people living on the reservation became collectively referred to as 'Skokomish'.

For a time following the signing of the Point-No-Point Treaty, the Twana people continued to hunt, fish, and gather in their ancestral territory. As white settlement increased, the Twana were eventually evicted from these areas. The land base on the Skokomish Reservation, which was a fraction of the traditional Twana territory, was insufficient to support traditional economies or ways of life. The federal government attempted to assimilate the Skokomish into white society by encouraging them to farm. Less than half of the land on the reservation, however, was arable. Because of its location on the river delta, reservation lands that were suitable for farming were also subject to periodic flooding and drainage problems. In addition to farming, many tribal men worked in logging and milling. Until the last 10 to 20 years, most of the Skokomish men were employed in the timber industry. Simpson Timber was, and continues to be, the major employer in the woods products industry in the area.

In 1874, the Twanas received land allotments under the Medicine Creek Treaty, preceding the General Allotment Act <sup>2</sup> by 13 years (Ruby and Brown 1992). As time passed, allotments owned by tribal members were sold (usually to non-Indians) to provide cash to poor families or pay off debts, resulting in a checkerboard pattern of land ownership on the reservation. Today, Indians own a minority of the land on the reservation: Simpson Timber Company owns the majority, followed by the City of Tacoma (Halliday and Chehak 2000).

The loss of traditional lands and livelihoods was mirrored by the loss of traditional social structure and culture. In the late 1800s, traditional tribal governance structures were abolished as the Bureau of

Indian Affairs (BIA) set reservation policies. Children were forcibly removed from their homes to attend BIA boarding schools, which prohibited native practices, traditions, religious beliefs, and language. Attendance at Indian boarding schools was common among Skokomish tribal children up to the 1960s.

In the 1920s, Tacoma City and Light began construction of two dams on the north fork of the Skokomish River. Known as the Cushman Project, the dams diverted most of the water from the river to a power plant on Hood Canal. The north fork was regarded as the most important salmon and steelhead-producing stream on Hood Canal. Despite opposition from the Tribe, as well as the BIA and state fisheries agencies, the project was completed without the required state water rights, state-required fish passage facilities, or recognition of tribal water or fishing rights. The Tribe sued to stop completion of the dam in the 1930s, but lost. In 1974, Tacoma City Light and Power submitted a request to the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee (FERC) for relicensing of the Cushman dams. The Tribe again filed suit, this time against both Tacoma City Light and Power and FERC, claiming that the dam was never properly licensed. The case has been in litigation to this day, draining much of the Tribe's financial resources and energy.

Development of a more autonomous tribal governance structure began in 1934, with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), which established federally-recognized tribal governments. The Skokomish reorganized their governance structure under the IRA, adopting a constitution, by-laws, and a charter. Further development of a self-governing structure was delayed until the late 1960s, when policies again favored greater control for tribes and self-determination. The Skokomish Tribal Council was established as the governing body of the Tribe, and held their first meeting in 1972. In 1975, the Tribe revised its constitution following the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which called for maximum Indian participation in setting the direction of federal services

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2. The General Allotment Act of 1887 (referred to as the Dawes Act) privatized reservation land, which was held in common by tribal members. Land allotments were granted to individuals and families ranging from 30 to 120 acres. "Surplus" land not allotted or otherwise reserved for the tribe was sold to the government and made available for homesteading. The result of the Dawes Act and the "Allotment Era" was the loss of 64 percent of tribally owned land between 1887 and 1933. Although originally the Dawes Act claimed to protect Indian property rights during the land rushes of the 1890s, in reality, the goal, according to the BIA (2000), was to "break up the tribal mass", abolish tribal governments, and assimilate the Indians into the larger society."

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The Cushman hydroelectric plant uses water diverted from the north fork of the Skokomish River. Much of the tribe's financial resources have gone towards litigation to remove the dam.

to Indian communities. The Secretary of the Interior approved the constitution and by-laws in 1980. The Tribe began to develop programs and provide services to tribal members such as HUD housing, which offered affordable housing and encouraged people to move back to the reservation. Passage of the Tribal Self-Governance Act <sup>3</sup> in 1993 marked another step toward tribal autonomy. Federal appropriations could now be passed directly to tribes (rather than through BIA and IHS grants), and tribal governments expanded. The Skokomish Tribe took over administration of some federal programs, established new departments such as economic development, and social and health services.

The ability of tribal members to engage in traditional livelihoods was enhanced in the 1970s with the passage of the Boldt Decision, which reaffirmed treaty fishing rights for Washington tribes. As part of the original Treaty of Point-No-Point, the Skokomish and other tribes were reserved the right to fish “at all usual and accustomed grounds and stations in common with the citizens of the territory.” Over time, however, the state limited Indian fisheries to subsistence fishing only on rivers that passed through reservation lands. In the 1970s, U.S. District Court Judge George Boldt re-

affirmed treaty fishing rights and established tribes as co-managers of the fisheries resource. The Boldt Decision entitled the tribes to harvest 50 percent of the salmon on all usual and accustomed fishing grounds, which, for the Skokomish, included all of the waters along the eastern Olympic Peninsula. Salmon fishing, which was at one time a key component to traditional Twana livelihood, culture, and religion, once again became an economically viable way of life for Skokomish and other tribes. In 1996-97, the Boldt decision was expanded to include shrimp, crab, and groundfish. In 1973, a salmon processing plant was built by the Tribe, that purchased fish from tribal members. The plant ran until 1978, when it was forced to close due to the decline in the fisheries, market collapse, lack of capital, and decreases in prices due to competition from fish farms and foreign fisheries.

### **Key Issues in the 1990s**

One of the key issues that the Tribe faced during the period in which the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative (NEAI) took place was the development of an autonomous tribal government that offered a full range of programs and services to its people. The last tribal census (conducted in 1985) showed

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3. The Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1993 amended the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. It established a program of self-governance within the US Department of Interior, directing the Secretary of the Interior to enter into annual funding agreements with each participating tribe, and authorized appropriations.

a population on the reservation of 414, with a total tribal membership of 829. Because tribal revenues were limited to taxes on commercial fishing, cigarettes, beer, and gas, the Tribe relied heavily on grant funding for most of its programs.

Substantial movement toward full governmental authority was achieved in the 1990s with improvements in healthcare facilities, increased staff in health and social service delivery, expansion of the Natural Resources Department, and development of an Economic Development Department. Employment of tribal members within tribal government also increased. During this period there was relative consistency within the tribal council, as well as among staff. Within the past few years, however, staff turnover has increased.

Another key issue facing the Skokomish community during the period of NEAI was a decline in the viability of natural resources-based employment. Among those tribal members living on the reservation, sources stated that a large percentage were dependent on logging and fishing for their primary and secondary sources of income. One tribal member stated that, up until the 1980s, “all the [Skokomish] men worked in logging.” In 1985, Simpson Timber Company closed their old growth mill and associated logging camps, which resulted in approximately 500 layoffs. Smaller logging companies also went out of business. According to a Skokomish Tribal Census conducted in 1985, 11 percent of the tribal population relied on logging and other forest products for their primary source of income. There are no data available, however, that shows the percentage working in the timber industry prior to 1985.

Following the Boldt Decision, many tribal members relied on commercial and subsistence salmon fisheries for their livelihoods. According to the 1985 Tribal Census, approximately 50 percent of the tribal population relied on fishing as a secondary source of income, while 10 percent relied on fishing as their primary income source. By the mid to late 1980s, however, the viability of salmon as a source of income had decreased due to declines in the fishery and competition from fish farms. “Fifteen years ago, you could depend on the resource for most of your living. Today, fishing is side money—you have to come up with something else to make a living,” states one tribal member. As salmon declined, fishers relied more on oysters, clams, and shrimp. Currently, the emphasis is on geoduck,<sup>4</sup> which requires commercial diving certification. Some tribal members feel that the reliance on natural resources is risky: “There has to be a mental shift within the community. People have to come up with another means of making a living, because the fisheries are not always going to be there.”

Alternative employment opportunities, however, are very limited on the reservation. Work opportunities are primarily with the tribal government or tribal economic programs, such as the tribally owned store and farm market. The Tribe currently employs about 100 people part-time and full-time. Others commute to Shelton or Olympia for work. More tribal families would like to move back to the reservation, but are unable to do so due to employment limitations and a lack of housing. According to labor market statistics from the BIA, the unemployment rate was 68 percent among the 825 enrolled tribal members in 1997.

## NEAI Projects and Programs

### Washington Community Economic Revitalization Team (WA-CERT)

#### *Institutional Structure and Function*

One of the primary mechanisms for implementing the Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative was the development of State Community Economic

Revitalization Teams. The role of the SCERT was to coordinate delivery of state and federal assistance, and work with tribal governments, local governments, and private and non-profit organizations. Involvement by the Skokomish in the SCERT process did not begin until 1995 (one year after the Initiative began), when the Tribe was invited to a WA-CERT conference in

4. Geoduck (pronounced “goeey duck”) is a large, burrowing clam found in the intertidal and subtidal zones of Puget Sound.

Ellensburg, WA. The conference was set up to educate communities about process and provide technical assistance on project development. Five or six communities were present at the conference. In 1996, the Tribe submitted a list of 11 prioritized projects to the WA-CERT based on priorities developed at the Ellensburg meeting and discussions among tribal planners and the Tribal Council. The majority of project proposals were written by the Tribe's director of economic development, and then ratified and prioritized by the Tribal Council. Once prioritized, the Tribal Council submitted the list to the state. The top priorities were land acquisition and a strategic development plan for the reservation. The idea was that if the Tribe was able to develop a strategic plan, acquire land, and develop basic infrastructure (e.g., wastewater treatment facilities), economic development opportunities could be expanded. It was not until 2000 that the Tribe re-evaluated their list of projects, and submitted a new list to the State.

Overall, the CERT process was recognized as being important in obtaining federal funds. One staff person felt that WA-CERT created a mechanism for grassroots planning: "Thoughts became reality through the prioritization process." Another stated that "WA-CERT helped us synthesize as a Tribe—it wouldn't allow the departments to act as independent fiefdoms." There was confusion, however, about whether state dollars could be accessed through WA-CERT. Tribal staff members were also unclear about the importance of the prioritization process (i.e., whether projects listed as high priority would be the only ones funded). One person felt that given the Tribe's limited staff resources, greater technical assistance and support was needed: "It would be useful if we could have more help from WA-CERT in shepherding us through the process—like a benevolent grandmother." Recognizing the need to work more closely with tribes, in March 2000, a shared staff position was created between WA-CERT and the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to hire a Tribal Economic Development Consultant to help tribes participate more fully in the WA-CERT system.

One staff member felt that the CERT process worked in a very linear way, which was, at times, incompatible with how things functioned with the Tribe: "Reality is less idealized than the WA-CERT vision . . . Here it is a struggle to maintain daily func-

tions like healthcare, day care, and sanitation, much less do anything else." With turnover of staff and limited resources, the time frame for completing projects was often delayed and trajectories often altered. "The reality is that it takes longer to put a vision into place than just a few years . . . It's an on-going and long-term process . . . It takes so much longer to build steam."

## **Projects**

### *Hwy 101 Retail Corridor*

In 1996, the Tribe received a \$23,137 grant from Washington State Community Trade and Economic Development's Washington Development Network Fund to conduct a feasibility/market study of a proposed four-phase retail development along the Highway 101 corridor. The proposed development included construction of a tourist boutique, ice cream parlor, franchise restaurant, and tribal vendor stalls. The long-term goal of the development was to create 12 family-wage jobs over five years and encourage approximately six tribal entrepreneurs.

Highway 101 is the main route along the eastern side of the Olympic Peninsula, and passes through a portion of the Skokomish Reservation. In the 1970s, a tribal smoke shop was the Tribe's only presence along the highway. Development of a retail corridor in this area was initiated in the mid-1980s with the creation of a trading post (Twana Trade Center) and expansion of the Tribe's convenience store. The goal was to provide employment opportunities for tribal members and generate revenue for the Tribe.

Construction of the development was completed in 1998. At the time of this study, however, the building was being converted into a small gaming facility that would feature 16 electronic slot machines. The Tribe received a loan from a gaming supplier ("Multi-media") to put in the machines. Revenues will be used to repay the loan. Although the gaming facility has displaced the original retail enterprises, sales of crafts and food items will continue through the newly created farm market building (see next page).

### *Land Acquisition and Reservation Strategic Development Plan*

In 1997, the Tribe received a \$15,000 grant from the Forest Service-Rural Community Assistance

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Program for a strategic land development plan. The original objective of the plan was to help the Tribe set priorities for land acquisition and provide an operational guide to implement goals and objectives developed from previous strategic planning efforts. Because the Tribe owned only two percent of the land on the reservation, space was limited for housing, economic enterprises, infrastructure, and government buildings. Development efforts thus focused on land acquisition and infrastructure; specifically construction of a wastewater system that would allow the tribal government to expand and provide basic sanitation. Concomitant with these efforts was the need for strategic planning to identify feasible alternatives.

The Strategic Action Plan was completed at the end of 1998, and focused on long-range planning for economic diversification and goal prioritization strategies. Originally, the Tribe hired a consultant to facilitate the planning effort. The consultant, however, quit three months prior to completion of the plan, and a tribal staff member completed the compilation of the plan. Specific outcomes of the plan included formation of a Community Action Team, comprised of community members and the Skokomish Tribal Council. The Community Action Team identified the following 10 goals for the community:

- Eliminate drug and alcohol abuse
- Prevent school drop-out/Provide educational incentives and opportunities

- Eliminate family violence
- Provide economic development/employment/job training
- Provide positive law enforcement and public safety
- Preserve cultural identity/language
- Provide sound natural resource/fisheries/transportation and land management
- Provide activities and programs for elders and youth; including language and cultural programs
- Provide sound flood control strategies
- Protect water quality

The Community Action Team also developed a vision statement for the next 20 years:

We envision the Skokomish Tribal community to have a healthy, safe environment where both children and adults complete their educational, vocational and job training goals, where responsive tribal programs and personal commitment unite to successfully eliminate drug and alcohol abuse and family violence, where meaningful youth and elder programs and cultural enrichment programs involve the whole community and all ages, where plentiful family-wage jobs and economic opportunities are created by a diverse and vibrant local economy, where hunting, fishing and shellfish



The Initiative-funded Farm Market, completed in October 2000 offers local produce, seafood, and craft items.

resources are protected, restored, and enhanced for future generations, where sufficient housing, public safety, transportation, flood control, natural resource protection, and economic development are provided for current and future growth and where tribal government ability combines with community strength to create a self-sufficient, united Skokomish Tribal nation.

Short and long-term program or project objectives were also developed for each department within the tribal government. In describing the vision for the community, one tribal member states:

We wanted to provide employment opportunities so that people could live and work here. How do we do it? Through land acquisition, finding viable funding opportunities, building capacity to provide capable employees, creating financial capability, and prioritizing what types of businesses to have.

One tribal member felt that the strategic plan was important in demonstrating to others that they went through the prioritization process.

#### *Farm Market*

As part of the vision of developing a Highway 101 retail corridor, the Tribe sought funding to construct a tribally owned farmer's market building that offered local produce, seafood, and craft items. For years, a local (non-Indian) farmer had operated a vegetable stand along Highway 101. The Tribe owned land on both sides of the farm-market shed. When the farmer retired in the early 90s, the Tribe purchased the property. Development of a new farm market was not immediate, however, because of considerable debate within the tribal council about whether the site should continue to be a farmer's market. Some tribal members questioned the viability and profitability of the market, and the project was put on hold.

In 1998, the Tribe decided to proceed with construction of the market, and received a \$124,250 grant from USDA-RDA/RBEG. In 2000, the Tribe received a \$49,874 grant from the Forest Service-Rural Community Assistance Program to cover cost overruns.

Construction of the building was completed in October 2000. The building stands out along Highway 101 as an attractive and inviting center, painted with traditional Coastal Salish motifs. The store is currently open three days a week, with extended hours in the summer months. A tribal, non-profit organization (A&A) provided a grant for management of the farm-market. The two-year grant will provide training to tribal members, who will eventually take over management.

#### *Hydrogeological Study for Skokomish Sewage Treatment Plant*

One of the early ideas for promoting economic development on the Reservation was the creation of a destination resort along Hwy 101 that would feature a golf course and hotel. The Tribe, however, lacked investors, sufficient land for development, and basic infrastructure. Simpson Timber Company had property available that the Tribe was negotiating for at the time. WA-CERT encouraged the Tribe to focus first on developing basic infrastructure (i.e., a wastewater treatment facility). In addition to supporting the proposed resort, a new sewage system could help mitigate existing health and water-quality concerns resulting from flooding and septic overflows on the Reservation, as well as serve other communities in northern Mason County.

The Tribe received an Indian Health Service grant to hire a contractor to work on the facilities plan. Surplus property owned by the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) was identified as a potential site to locate a sewage treatment plant. Prior to NEAI, transfer of WDOT land to the Tribe would have been impossible due to agency restrictions on land trades. According to one source, the Tribe's connection with WA-CERT enabled a "bigger conversation" to take place. That is, interagency discussions through WA-CERT, coupled with internal community planning, stimulated multi-agency support and legislative action that allowed WDOT to negotiate a land trade agreement with the Tribe.

Subsequently, a \$6,560 hydrogeological study was funded by the Forest Service Rural Community Assistance Program to evaluate the suitability of the WDOT site for the wastewater treatment facility. The Washington Department of Ecology conducted the

assessment and found the site suitable for the wastewater treatment plant.

The sewage treatment facility would serve a larger area than just the reservation. A partnership is currently being developed between the Tribe, Mason County Economic Development Commission, the City of Hoodspport, and the Public Utilities District. The proposal is being submitted both by Mason County as well as the Tribe. In the past, the County was reluctant to work with the Tribe because they thought that they were competing for funds, and the Tribe had their separate WA-CERT list. Cooperation was proposed, however, because the Tribe is able to access monies that the County cannot.

### *Jobs-in-the-Woods*

Between 1993 and 2000, the Tribe received grants for five Job-in-the-Woods projects, totaling \$965,750. These grants were funded primarily by the BIA, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also providing some funds. The objective of the Jobs-in-the-Woods projects was to protect and enhance habitat for salmon while providing job opportunities and technical training to Skokomish tribal members who were economically dislocated as a result of changes in the timber and fishing industries. All of the projects involved restoration to improve fish passage and habitat on the rivers, creeks, and deltas of the Reservation.

Two major wetland complexes were the focus of restoration efforts: Scabob Creek, located on the southern end of the Reservation; and Nalley Slough Estuary, on the northern end. Scabob Creek was a freshwater wetland that was highly susceptible to flooding. Restoration efforts were to reconnect the wetland to the river. Nalley slough covered the confluence of freshwater streams to an estuarine wetland. Restoration efforts were designed to enhance the rearing habitat for salmon while Scabob Creek focused on spawning habitat.

The first grant was awarded in 1995 for the restoration of the Scabob Wetlands. A \$274,356 grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, matched with \$143,521 from BIA, funded the removal of culverts along Scabob Creek to allow fish passage under the road, and reduce flooding. The original gravel road, constructed in the middle of the wetland, often blocked the flow of water during heavy rains, resulting in flooding. Culverts were often blocked by debris, making them impenetrable to

salmon. The Jobs-in-the-Woods project replaced the three existing culverts with bridges, allowing the free passage of water and salmon under the road, and bringing the road up to WDOT standards. Three displaced timber workers from the tribal community were hired for the project.

Also in 1995, a bioengineering project was funded through a \$97,008 grant from the BIA. The project consisted of debris removal from a collapsed bridge on Skokomish River, stabilization of the riverbank, and site re-vegetation. The Tribe employed a crew of four tribal members, who were paid \$12.80/hr. The re-vegetation was done by Americorps volunteers.

Another \$46,513 project by the BIA was funded in 1995 for additional restoration work on the Skokomish River. No additional information was available for this project.

In 1997, the BIA-JIW program again provided a \$197,617 grant for further restoration of the Skokomish River. The project consisted of restoration efforts in three locations along the river. The first site, Sunnyside Creek, involved the conversion of multiple, small runoff channels into a single larger channel to provide sufficient flow for salmon, and create spawning and over-wintering habitat for Coho and chum. The second project involved removal of an old tide gate (Nally's) at the mouth of the river to provide flood relief and remove a fish passage barrier. In addition to removing the tide gate, the channel was regraded and revegetated with native plant species. The third phase of the project involved creating a channel to connect an isolated pond (Louise's Pond) to the Scabob Creek system to again provide salmon rearing and over-wintering habitat. The project included the installation of a concrete bridge to allow the channel to flow under River Road and connect to the wetland. Three tribal members, who were displaced timber workers, were hired as Habitat Restoration Technicians. They received an annual salary of \$22,000 plus benefits and on-the-job training.

In 1999, the Tribe received \$191,735 from the BIA for the restoration of Nalley Slough. The project involved removal of old concrete bridge abutments to restore the natural flow of the channel and increase habitat for salmon and other fish. In addition, the project removed exotic vegetation and replanted with native species. Three technicians were hired again for the work at an annual salary of \$24,000.

## Current Socioeconomic Conditions and Effects of NEAI on Community Well-Being

### Socioeconomic Condition

The Tribe continues to face many challenges, the majority of which were not associated with the Northwest Forest Plan, nor relieved by the Initiative. For example, the number of children eligible for free and reduced lunch at the local elementary school has increased from 55 percent in 1994-5 to 65 percent in 1999-00, peaking in 1998-99 at 67 percent (see Table 1 below). According to the BIA, 65 percent of those employed lived below the poverty level in 1997. Social services and healthcare workers are concerned about an increased number of households that will soon be without welfare assistance due to the 5-year limit of eligibility for TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families). The Tribe is also concerned about their elders, since most do not have money for retirement and will require some form of assistance and support. High unemployment, high school dropout, high alcohol and drug abuse, and high domestic violence rates continue to be problems on the Reservation. Declines in the natural resource base continue to undermine traditional livelihoods, while the Cushman lawsuit has drained Tribal financial capital. Thus, NEAI projects appear to have had little effect on overall socioeconomic conditions on the Skokomish Reservation.

At a local level, however, successes were visible as a direct result of NEAI projects. These successes may not be visible statistically, but have played an important role in building Tribal community capacity.

### Community Capacity

Community capacity is the collective ability of residents in a community to respond to external and internal stresses, to create and take advantage of opportunities, and to meet local needs. Community capacity consists of five dimensions: (1) physical capital, which includes a community physical infrastructure (e.g., sewer systems, business parks, capital assets such as equipment, housing stock and schools); (2) financial capital, which includes money, credit, and other financial resources available for local use; (3) human capital, which includes the skills, education, experiences and general abilities and capabilities of residents; (4) cultural capital, the myths, beliefs, norms, and lifeways that serve to organize groups and facilitate survival; and (5) social capital, which includes the willingness of residents to work together toward community goals (and not just self-interested goals). Evaluating the impact of NEAI projects on the capacity of the Skokomish Tribe and community thus requires a closer examination of these various dimensions of capacity.

With a minimal tax base, and much of it diverted to the Cushman Dam lawsuit, the financial capital of the Tribe and the community is extremely limited. NEAI-funded projects that focused on building financial capital centered on development of the Hwy 101 retail corridor. Although it is too soon to determine if these businesses will succeed, potential benefits to the

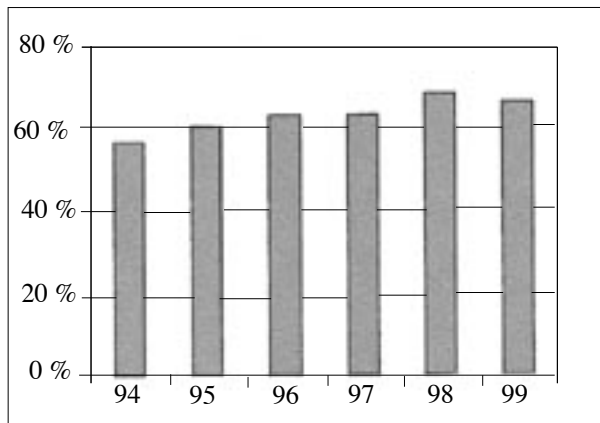


Table 1: Percent of children eligible for free and reduced lunch at Hood Canal School, located on the Skokomish Reservation (National Center for Education Statistics).

Skokomish community include employment in the businesses as well as outlets and income from the sale of artwork, seafood, and prepared foods.

Construction of the Farm Market and the Ice Cream Parlor/Sandwich Shop also initiated infrastructure development for the vision of a Hwy 101 retail corridor, contributing to increases in both physical and financial capital. Spin-off developments from the farm market are already proposed, including an interpretive center, an entertainment stage, parking lot, and storm water management system. Plans for the storm-water system include two retention ponds and a bioswale, which will include a native plant garden. The interpretive center is currently on the WA-CERT list for funding.

Of all of the projects and programs that were funded under NEAI, Jobs-in-the-Woods showed the greatest success in terms of its effect on community capacity. In addition to the watershed restoration work that was carried out, the skills developed by the trainees were transferable to public works projects on the Reservation. Heavy equipment work, for example, that was formally contracted out could now be done by the Tribe. "It allowed us to build capability in-house," states one staff person. "We gained the ability to do public works—storm water management, emergency response, evacuation, road maintenance . . . When we had a broken water line, we could fix it." The program thus contributed to the development of internal capacity and expertise.

Jobs-in-the-Woods projects also resulted in ecological, socioeconomic, and cultural benefits. "There is a cultural element to restoration . . . We're not just fixing culverts . . . It's culturally relevant," notes one staff member. Restoration efforts brought back Olympia oysters, the only native oyster on Hood Canal. Sweet grass, commonly used in basketry, was also restored. "It was a complete restoration," the staff member continued. "We were honored in the Long House. It was close to heart for people." The tribal council fully endorsed the efforts, and was very pleased with the results. One staff member observed that,

In a community where there is 60 to 70 percent seasonal unemployment among men, there's not a lot of money to spend on

the environment. But the Tribe spent over a third of its money on the environment . . . It's a testament to how important this is to the culture and economy.

Additional benefits to the Tribe included the reduction of flooding and associated health and safety risks. In the past, clogged culverts on Scabob Creek resulted in flooding, and subsequent damage to property and septic systems during high water periods. One staff member estimated that 14 to 18 houses were lost due to flooding within the last 15 years. Overloaded septic systems leaked raw sewage into the creek, leading to high fecal coliform levels in the wetland. The high nutrient content in the creek led to algae blooms and eutrophication, depleting oxygen from the system and killing trees and fish. Restoration efforts opened up the water-storing capacity of the wetland and improved drainage.

Ecological benefits to salmon were also reportedly visible. "Our results were demonstrable . . . People noticed that there were fish in the slough." Accounts were made of elders taking their grandchildren to watch the salmon return to creeks where fish had not been seen in years. Despite visible signs of improved passage for salmon, one staff member tempered the success by stating, "No matter what we do [in terms of restoration], the Cushman Dam is still the 600-pound gorilla in our backyard. We won't have any major ecosystem restoration unless the natural flows of the river are restored."

### **Effects of NEAI on Workers**

The impacts of NEAI to natural resources workers within the Skokomish Community revolved around the Jobs-in-the-Woods projects. Benefits of Jobs-in-the-Woods projects to workers included steady employment for some, development of new skills, and a "sense of pride and purpose." On-the-job training included operation of heavy equipment, as well as watershed restoration techniques and assessment. "We've helped with fish counts, learned about fish and hydrology, and have done some surveying," states one trainee. "It was a way to create jobs out of crisis . . . We created jobs that restored the resources," states one staff member.

In addition to building technical capacity, the program also contributed in other ways to the capacity of the Department. “We were able to train tribal members that cared about the community . . . and knew the history of the people and culture,” states one staff member. “They were able to bring in their experiential knowledge. These guys knew how to fish—knew where the fish were. They were also loggers, so they were good at setting chokers and manipulating trees.” Combining the local, experiential knowledge of the Jobs-in-the-Woods trainees with the scientific knowledge of the Natural Resources staff was, according to one staff member, “the key to success.”

Subsequent grants have allowed three of the Jobs-in-the-Woods trainees to become permanent staff within the Natural Resources Department. Two of the three have been steadily employed since 1994. Although these numbers are relatively low, in a community of approximately 250 households, where local work is scarce, even a few jobs can have an important impact. “Jobs-in-the-Woods was a great value to the community because of the limited job opportunities on the reservation . . . It allowed people to stay in the area,” states one tribal member.

One disadvantage of the Jobs-in-the-Woods Program was that it interfered with seasonal activities such as fishing, crabbing, and shell fishing, which led to some attrition among participants. However, those that stayed in the program felt that the work provided more secure employment than fishing. “Other guys devote a lot of time to fishing. I like the pay-

check every two weeks. My kids do the fishing. They go crabbing, fishing, and diving for geoduck. I’m a diabetic and can’t go diving,” states one trainee.

Although content with working for the Tribe, trainees have contemplated self-employment as contractors. A number of barriers, however, prevented them from pursuing this possibility. These barriers include:

- Literacy—some workers lack sufficient education to be able to fill out paperwork
- Capital—lack of funds to purchase equipment, bonding, insurance, and licensing
- Business start-up know-how
- Lack of restoration jobs (and knowledge of how to find them if they exist)

Both staff and workers suggested that the following improvements be made to the program:

- Additional training in skills, such as welding, that are currently contracted to outsiders by the Tribe
- A need for upward mobility (in terms of salaries, skills, and responsibility) within the job
- Diversification of projects to include tasks that are currently being done outside of the reservation (such as the repair of fishing gear and equipment)
- Longer-duration grants (i.e., 3-4 years) for greater job security
- Information about independent contracting

## Patterns and Themes

Success of projects can be attributed in part to a relatively stable, and growing, tribal government through the 1990s. Successful programs, such as Jobs-in-the-Woods, can be attributed to the Tribe’s existing internal capacity, i.e., the continuity, competency, and capabilities of staff within the Natural Resources Department. “We had a staff that was good at writing grants.” The ability of the Tribe to continue to receive funding for Jobs-in-the-Woods (JIW) projects is also in large part due to “effort and determination to make

it happen.” Pre-existing human capital, thus, was an important pre-requisite for program success.

To attribute success solely to human capital, however, would overlook the importance of process, relationship, and structure. For the Jobs-in-the-Woods program, four key elements were attributed to program success:

- (1) *Integration of local/cultural and scientific knowledge.* Restoration efforts began with substantial

time devoted to thought and discussion. “We received input from the tribal council, talked to fishermen, looked at the eddies, talked to elders about what the creek used to be like, what used to be there,” states one tribal staff member. Using the tradition of oral history, staff obtained knowledge and information from talking with elders as well as with its own crew, who were all tribal members.

- (2) *“World class” estuary.* Since its establishment in 1855, the Skokomish Reservation has been fraught with problems associated with flooding and “swampification.” Within the past 10 years, however, with greater appreciation of the role and function of wetlands among scientists and the general public, the reservation’s estuaries have received state and federal recognition as a critical resource to restore and preserve. “The system is trashed and the needs are so great . . . There are decades worth of projects . . . It was easy to get grants,” states one tribal staff member. The high needs of the estuary and public visibility, combined with the grant-writing abilities of the staff resulted in the development of a powerful department.
- (3) *Flexible departmental structure.* At the time that the first JITW grants became available, the Nat-

ural Resources Department was newly formed and still tied closely to Tribal fisheries. The Tribe was able to leverage dollars between programs to keep the crew working on a more permanent basis. As one staff person recalls, “We had a person that was paid half from JITW and half from fisheries.” The JITW funds were used as seed money for training. When funds were depleted, they would cycle over to fisheries money. One source referred to the cycle as “fisheries in springtime and JITW in summer.” By being creative and flexible with funding sources, the Department was able to maintain a “permanent cadre of staff.”

- (4) *“There was a guy at BIA that was very helpful . . .”* A staff person from the BIA-JITW Program worked closely with the Skokomish Natural Resources Department, providing advice and technical assistance about grant requirements and procedures. “He would give us a heads up about due dates, review our grants and make suggestions . . . He was always available to talk with us . . . A good guy . . . Cheered us on,” states one tribal staff member. The role of the facilitator, in this case a paid staff member that provided personalized support to the Tribe, was recognized as another key component to program success.

## Conclusion

For the Skokomish, natural resources management and policy decisions directly connect at multiple levels with culture, community well being, and economic development. In addition to those that were directly impacted by the loss of jobs within the timber industry, livelihoods have also been affected by declines in the fisheries. The construction of Cushman Dam, as well as logging in the watershed, has altered the hydrological regime of the river and delta, resulting in flooding, septic overflows, sedimentation, loss of habitat for salmon, and declines in the fisheries. The lack of a revenue base, the decline in natural

resources, and the costs of legal action all combined to create a formidable set of issues to address.

Despite these many challenges, however, the Tribe was able to achieve success on a number of fronts. Success was tied with pre-existing capacity, relationships with funding institutions, a flexible institutional structure, and planning efforts that included communication and exchange of knowledge with the tribal community. The knowledge and sensitivity to ecological issues held by tribal members reflects the strong cultural capital that exists within the Tribe.

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**Interviewees**

Teresa Barron	Natural Resource Planner, Skokomish Tribe
Ed Binder	Economic Development Planner, Skokomish Tribe
Karl Denison	US Forest Service, Community Assistance Program
Keith Dublanica	Director of Natural Resources, Skokomish Tribe
Dwane Edwards	JIW Trainee, Natural Resources Technician, Skokomish Tribe
Marie Gouley	Director of Health, Skokomish Tribe
Judy Hoeffling	Economic Development Director, Skokomish Tribe
Gordon James	Former Chairman, Skokomish Tribal Council
Colleen Jollie	Tribal Economic Development Consultant, WA-CERT/Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Nancy LaClaire	Mason County Historical Society, Tribal Member
Jim Park	Former Natural Resources Director
Victoria Pavel	Controller, Skokomish Tribe
Richard Smith	JIW Trainee, Natural Resources Technician, Skokomish Tribe
Robert Smith	JIW Trainee, Natural Resources Technician, Skokomish Tribe