## People and Places

### Who We Are

The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest of the Snohomish, Skykomish, Snoqualmie and other allied bands signatory to the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott. dxʷlalip (anglicized as Tulalip) in Lushootseed means "far to the end"; it describes how a canoe must travel upon entering Tulalip Bay to avoid the large sandbar extending from Mission Point. Since time immemorial, our ancestors hunted, gathered, and fished throughout their territories extending from the Cascade crest to the Salish Sea, and on waters from Vashon Island to the Canadian border. We traveled extensively, interacting with neighboring tribes and hunting and gathering over a wide area of the Pacific Northwest. The continued availability and use of lands and resources on ancestral lands on and off the reservation is critical to perpetuating our culture, identity, and sovereignty as a distinct Tribe. The water, plants and trees all serve a purpose that helps the Tulalip peoples to continue their cultural lifeways that have been rooted for thousands of years upon this land. We understand that this land, this place, and our language connect us to all things and must be conserved and nurtured. The Tulalip Tribes' cultural continuity is tied to the constant ebb and flow of natural resources.

Our people humbly respect all things in our environment; they are gifts the Creator provided for us, and, like our ancestors, we only take what is necessary to sustain ourselves. After the experiences of the last 500 years, we recognize that our natural resources and cultural life ways and values are both very fragile. Without question, ours is a land and water-based culture. Our environment gives us a distinct sense of place that bonds us to this land by generations of elders who have lived before us from time immemorial. Each place has a name related to its physical characteristics, or historical significance. Our language brings us closer to these places, names, and stories and strengthens our relationship to the land, our ancestors, and our identity as Indian people. The spirit has blessed the Tulalip Tribes and sustained us, and we must to do whatever we can to maintain, nurture, and protect this great gift from The Creator.

From whitecap to whitecap, our ancestors sustainably managed the landscape ecosystems, and built villages and complex societies that existed for millennia. We lived as one with nature (In nature we find our relatives); our natural environment provided for all of our needs. We continue to live by the values of our ancestors by treating the earth as sacred, giving prayer, and giving thanks for what we receive. Despite consistent efforts by local and federal governments to make farmers out of fishermen, reeducate and de-culture our children in brutal boarding schools, and deny resource rights established in the treaty, our people, our culture, and our language persist. Our connection with the natural world sustained us through that time. Since the time of European contact, development and a pollution-based economy damaged the habitat, air, water, flora and fauna, and the people of Tulalip, and all suffered. These damaging effects continue today. A changing climate is one of the on-going challenges that threatens the environments our people honor and respect, and the resources we depend on for our survival as a sovereign people. Climate change is a direct threat to the rights our ancestors fought so hard to retain in the treaty.

In our language there is a word, zəVusadad, which encompasses our traditional teachings, stories, history, food, language, and instructions for rites of passage; it is the sacred knowledge of our people. We have always known that we are one with the environment: the plants, animals, water, air, the rivers, mountains, estuaries and coastlines; we are all intimately tied together. These are the lifeways we will always fight to protect. Our teachings and values continue to guide our lives to live as one with the land – to work with the natural world to the benefit of all species. It is our responsibility to

honor the earth so that it can sustain future generations. This is the reason why we always say we must think seven generations into the future for any issue. Climate change is no exception.

As Bernie Gobin always said "We are the salmon people, that is what our tribe is known as and we've always depended on the salmon resource." (Story of the Salmon Ceremony by Bernie Kai-Kai Gobin). This story is an example of the relationship between the Tulalip people and the natural world; it's also an example of the solemn promise that our ancestors made to protect the plants and animals that willingly give themselves up to us so that we can be sustained. sfuladX (salmon) is one of the most abundant food source of our people for thousands of years and none is more important than yubev (King Salmon). Climate change will challenge the survival of the salmon. We must fulfill our responsibility to protect the salmon as our ancestors promised. With the perseverance and humility of our traditional teachings, and the power of modern science, we strive to allow our future generations to give thanks to the salmon for their sacrifice every year as our ancestors have done.

**Where We Live**

Complex and abundant ecosystems contained all the resources our ancestors relied upon. The productivity of these ecosystems originate from the region's temperate climate and diverse, geologically active landscape. Over millions of years, tectonic and volcanic activity created the Olympic and Cascade Mountain ranges, with a lowland depression between them called the Salish Sea. Through the ice ages, glaciers and ice sheets shaped the landscape, widened valleys, and left behind enormous sediment deposits. These glacial deposits of gravel, cobble, clay, and silt fill the Salish Sea Basin and river valley floors, and form large bluffs that ring the shores of the Sea, forming wide beaches where they are eroded and transported by tides, waves, and currents. These materials formed soils, spawning gravels, estuaries, clam beds, forage fish beaches, oyster grounds, eel grass meadows, and crab nurseries.

The large mountain ranges and complex topography of this land has major effects on local weather and climate patterns. Cool damp air and storm systems move eastward from the Pacific Ocean. Forced upward by the mountains, this moisture-laden air rises, cools, and condenses into rain at lower elevations and snow at higher elevations. This common phenomenon in the fall, winter, and spring gives the Pacific Northwest its dark, cool, and wet reputation. A temperate climate with cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers at relatively low altitudes allows for long and productive growing seasons for the numerous plants and animals important to the Tulalip people. Over several generations our people continue to witness changes to these seasons. The impacts of climate change are becoming more noticeable.

Some of the largest trees in the world grew here in the misty lowlands and river valleys of the Salish Sea. Rivers eroded and meandered freely through valleys carpeted in forest, undercutting banks that supported huge trees, causing them to fall into and become part of the river. Beavers were prolific, engineering the landscape with networks of dams and large wetlands and swamps, storing water and feeding streams into dry summer months. Lush forests and ubiquitous wetlands soaked up heavy rains and stored floodwaters, moderating flooding. Ancient trees were big enough to be major structural elements of rivers, creating complex river ecosystems with numerous channels, eddies, pools, gravel bars, backwaters, and forested islands supplemented by beaver ponds and wetlands: the habitat salmon evolved to thrive in.

The Snohomish is the primary watershed of The Tulalip Tribes. Our ancestors made their homes along river corridors, channels, and tributaries, and the shorelines of nearly every bay, inlet, and island in and around what are now the communities of the Tulalip reservation, Marysville, Everett, Monroe, Carnation, the islands of Camano and Whidbey and the San Juan's. They built long-houses and temporary summer and winter camps in places where resources were plentiful based on seasonal changes. These homes and villages extended from the mountains to the coast and islands, and in all the

ecosystems in between. They harvested bark from the zpayf (Western Red Cedar) to make clothing, baskets, and mats. The tree itself was carved into fefutzs (ocean going), and :elayf (river going) canoes as well as the support structure and planks for long houses. They hunted sqigoec (deer), koagoived (elk), bufE (ducks), sTeX (beaver), svetRXed (black bear) and s Z i : eyB(mountain goat). They gathered sQQelS;ed (berries) and qoebelaX (roots). They burned lowland and upland areas to keep habitats open and suitable for szeDeb (camas), huckleberries, blackberries and so that other important plants could thrive. Clams and shellfish were always abundant. When the sfuladX (salmon) came back home to the river, families fished.

Much has changed since settlers began populating the area. Settlers were attracted to this area by opportunities to exploit its rich natural resources. First, sQa: (sea otter) was hunted for its pelt, which fetched thousands of dollars each in the 1800s. In less than 50 years, sea otters were completely extirpated from the Salish Sea and have yet to reestablish in the Puget Sound. The massive salmon runs that fed tribes throughout the region as far away as Idaho were over-fished on an industrial scale. Fish traps, fishing fleets, and canneries proliferated throughout the region, and salmon populations quickly diminished to a fraction of their original size as the freshwater habitats they depend on were systematically destroyed, eliminated, or degraded in the name of “progress”.

The old growth trees that forested the river valleys were clear-cut, milled, and exported for the rapidly developing western world. Most forests are now young second growth forest and tree farms of periodically cut stands of young monocrop timber. These monocrop forests destroy the existing ecosystem and do not replace or support the plant diversity it once contained. The wild rivers, which ran swiftly across the valley floor, were altered without consideration for their important ecological role. The Army Corps of Engineers used barges and dynamite to remove the massive habitat-forming wood from the rivers, then straightened and constrained them with levees and dredged them into deep simplistic channels which fundamentally changed the landscape and habitats of the flood plain. These artificial and simplified rivers allowed space for agriculture and served as transportation and commercial corridors in the days before interstate highways. The rich soils of the floodplain, suitable for productive farmland, were cleared and graded, filling wetlands, simplifying, straightening, and dredging stream channels to improve drainage and flood protection. Railroads were constructed beneath bluffs along the banks of the Salish Sea, and tracks were protected from the energy of the sea by large boulders. These protections disconnected bluffs of glacial sediment from the waves of the Salish Sea so that they no longer feed beaches with sands and gravels that provide productive substrates for shellfish and forage fish. The landscape is now fundamentally, habitat by habitat, stream by stream, changed into an unsustainable ecosystem that is very different from the one our ancestors knew.

As settlement continued, and commerce created demand for the land our ancestors lived on since time immemorial, conflicts between tribes and settlers escalated. In 1855 our ancestors negotiated and signed a treaty that reserved our inherent rights of self-governance and self-determination. These rights specifically included the right to hunt, fish, and gather as our ancestors did – at usual and accustomed grounds as well as all open and unclaimed lands. In exchange for preserving these rights, the Treaty of Point Elliot ceded millions of acres of our lands to the federal government. This forced our ancestors to live on a small parcel of our land we retained as a reservation. Isolation on a reservation disrupted traditional seasonal movements that followed patterns in resource availability that have always been the basis of our lives and culture. Despite these challenges, the treaty negotiated by our ancestors ensured that we would be forever free to support our families and our culture through traditional lifeways we have practiced since time immemorial.

Since our ancestors signed the treaty, the population of settlers in our ancestral lands has grown exponentially into a thriving urban metropolis with the 3rd largest container port in the United States. Access to ocean shipping, massive forests of high quality timber, and cheap energy from hydroelectric production established the Salish Sea as an industrial powerhouse during World War 2. As population grew, the need for land grew with them. Most of the land surrounding the Salish Sea is now paved, built, converted to agriculture, or otherwise unnaturally altered. Most of the river valleys are denuded of forests. The demand for water from expanding urban and suburban populations is threatening summer stream flows in spawning streams. Recent studies show stormwater polluted with vehicle byproducts from traffic is potently toxic for coho salmon. A century of industrial growth has left a lingering legacy of toxic pollution. Environmental regulations have slowed some of the industrial pollution. However, many of the problem chemicals, such as DDT and PCBs, which formed much of the impetus of the Clean Water Act and the formation of the EPA, are legacy pollutants that persist in the food chain. Decades after their abolition, they are still one of the reasons Orca are struggling to survive.

These changes have drastically altered the landscape from the one our ancestors knew. These changes often occur very slowly, one parcel at a time, over decades, gradually altering the landscape and destroying habitat our treaty-protected resources depend on. This “death by a thousand cuts” is driving the decline of many of our resources, especially salmon. Currently, the area around the Salish Sea is one of the fastest growing regions in North America. This continues rapidly as unpermitted land use and development activities continue to remove trees, alter riverbanks, and build and pave land. Enforcement is under-funded and under-prioritized, despite regulations that should protect critical salmon habitat.

In these times of rapid change and rapidly expanding population, the same stresses that threaten our culture and lifeways continue to persist, but climate change will dramatically amplify existing threats. In recent years, unusual weather extremes have begun to reveal the consequences of climate change. Salmon populations are stressed to their breaking point and drought-stricken blueberry harvest areas have failed to produce a harvest. Though these extremes lie at the high end of natural variability, these conditions are part of an emerging pattern that will become more common as the climate changes. The effects observed are consistent with past predictions, and their effect on resources like salmon is alarming.

The Tulalip Tribes contribute very little to the causes of climate change but are disproportionately burdened by its affects. Climate change is yet another driver threatening the survival of our culture; it is continuing to damage our treaty-protected resources. Our people know how important it is to prepare for times of struggle and hardship (Story of the Seal Hunting Brothers). Therefore, we know that now is the time to protect our people and our culture for future generations by developing the Tulalip Climate Change Adaptation and Action Plan.

This plan seeks to address all of the effects climate change will have on The Tulalip people on the Tulalip reservation and all the lands and waters that support resources reserved by treaty. Though all of our fishing takes place within either the reservation bounds or our treaty reserved Usual and Accustomed grounds, we know that these species are affected by changes in habitat and food availability and quality over a wide geographic area. Salmon, for instance, spend a large portion of their lives in the Pacific Ocean. Thus, it is vital that the tribe work with our partners, federal, state, local, and tribal, to complete the multi-jurisdictional effort of implementing this plan on behalf of our membership.

The changes and challenges our people have endured over the last two centuries have dramatically threatened our culture and livelihood, but the Tulalip People know where our ancestors came from, and our ancestors adapted to changes in the past. The continued strength of our culture and our people in the face of these unprecedented changes is testament to the perseverance and spirit of Tulalip. Our ancestors teach us that we can only survive by honoring and respecting the Earth and its resources. By studying climate change and its effect on the local environments, the Tulalip Climate Change Adaptation Plan will build a foundation of knowledge of what changes we must anticipate for all future generations, and what actions we can take to minimize and reverse the threats to the Tulalip People, our culture and our livelihoods.