

TRIBAL PROGRAM NEWS

Resolution

by David R. Hatch

WHEREAS, the Siletz Tribal Council is empowered to act upon behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon by virtue of its powers set forth in ... the Constitution adopted by the tribe on June 2, 1979 and,

I grew up an enrolled member of a tribe that did not exist. I was a year old when recognition of all Western Oregon tribes was formally withdrawn by President Eisenhower and a Republican-controlled House and Senate. My little brother and sister could not enroll in our non-existent tribe.

WHEREAS, the basis for our economic and social life was the wealth of fish that entered our coastal streams, rivers, and bays providing a principal supply of foods which were shared by all and,

We were good little fishermen. We caught buckets of bullheads from the little boathouse my grandpa built at the mouth of the North Fork of the Siuslaw. When we had enough bullhead to bait six rings for a day, Grandpa would take us crabbing down by the jetty.

WHEREAS, our original fish weir sites in the bays and rivers of Oregon were used to harvest the once abundant anchovy, sucker, halibut, white sturgeon, green sturgeon, four types of perch, two types of herring, tomcod, candle fish (ooligan), topsmelt, surf smelt, longfin smelt, two types of sardines, starry flounder, chub, blue eels, brown eels, hake, Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, chum salmon, steelhead, and trout, and the devastation of these fisheries coincided with the degradation of our near-shore habitats and,

On every seven-mile run from Grandpa's boathouse down to the ocean and back, Grandpa told us about the big flounders he used to catch here and the perch he used to catch there. My dad's story of finding the big skate was my favorite. Dad, Grandpa, and the rifle came back on the next low tide and so did the skate. It did not make good crab bait. My great-grandpa, Ike Martin, might have been the one who repaired the ancient weir near the boathouse with milled lumber. Ike and my great-grandma died when my grandma was 11. Grandma was the sole survivor of her family. She was shipped to Chemawa Indian School in Salem, where she met an Aleut orphan, my grandpa.

WHEREAS, the sea otter is the second-most common marine mammal bone found in our middens and the degradation of our near-shore habitats coincided with the extermination of the sea otter and,

In the time called "pre-contact," our fish weirs brought us more than we needed. Every tide released the extra and returned with more. Seals or sea lions are the most common marine mammal bone in our middens, depending on where you are on the coast. Only our headmen wore robes of sea otter skins, so they were never over-hunted. "Managing" the seals, sea lions, and sea otter provided for the abundance we depended on. For thousands of years we practiced what we now call "ecosystem-based management."

WHEREAS, restoring the estuary and near-shore habitats will provide for the restoration of our traditional fisheries and fisheries which will benefit all Oregonians and,

Dad and his siblings were raised on the allotted land in Florence that Grandma inherited from her father, Ike. In Ike's time, individual tribal

members had to accept an allotment and give up their 1.1 million-acre Coast Reservation. In high school history class, Dad was "taught" Oregon Indians were representatives of "various stages of savage and barbarian culture." In small-town Florence, the family's best bet was to try to blend in. It wasn't a good time to tell the newcomers that the estuaries were changing.

WHEREAS, the state of Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 19 is to "conserve marine resources and ecological functions for the purpose of providing long-term ecological, economic, and social value and benefits to future generations" and requires the state to seek co-management arrangements with federal agencies in cooperation and other governmental agencies to ensure that ocean resources are managed and protected, and

Abundant, balanced, diverse, and sustainable estuary and near-shore ecosystems fell apart when our families were removed or prohibited from practicing our traditional harvest. Our practices were replaced with uninformed over-harvest, extirpation of key species, and management to promote single species, including conflicting species. I participated in the destruction. In high school, I made good summer money (\$1.75 an hour) brushing survey trails, helping the Forest Service build more roads to harvest more trees. I used my machete when the first Giant Pacific Salamander I met slowly opened his mouth to scare me. I am in debt to his spirit. In the winter we did piecework, transplanting invasive beach grass to kill the dunes. I learned from my mistakes.

WHEREAS, in 2002 the governor's Ocean Policy Advisory Council recommended the establishment of marine protected areas and these recommendations were supported by the governor, and

Then the governor's Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) was terminated and reconstituted by the Legislature. The governor's ability to select his own advisors was constrained and only a subset of his advisors is actually allowed to vote on issues. Legislative pace stalled action for three years. I am the solo tribal representative on the previous and new OPAC. When I pointed out that asking me to also represent the Coquille Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw is like asking France to also represent England and Spain, no one heard.

WHEREAS, a National Marine Sanctuary could provide the resources and tools for Oregon's coastal tribes to work in partnership with local communities and appropriate state and federal agencies to restore our near-shore and estuary ecosystems.

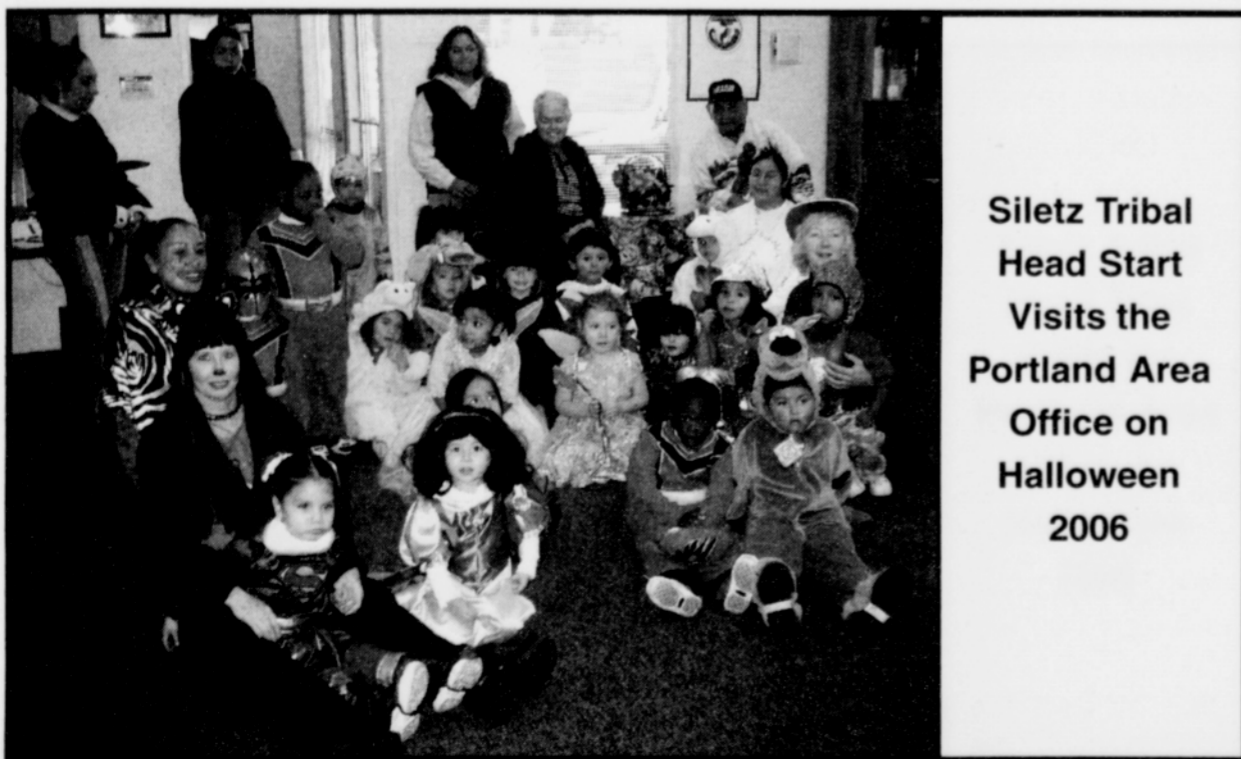
We have "managed" the near-shore and estuaries of Oregon for thousands of years. Like other OPAC representatives, we know simple access restrictions are inappropriate. Restoring the function of the ecosystems requires concerted efforts to restore missing species, balance the interactions of species, and harvest in a sustainable manner. It requires an informed public and the resources to keep track of what we do. We won't have a trail so we need to study and learn as we go.

BE IT NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED

That the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon formally request the U.S. Departments of Commerce and the Interior initiate the process of developing a National Marine Sanctuary on the Oregon coast to restore the near-shore plant communities and restore the historical abundance and productivity in Oregon's coastal rivers and bays for all Oregonians.

We adopted this resolution on April 18, 2003. The Coquille Tribe adopted it on March 27, 2004. Gov. Kulongoski met with the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon on Dec. 12, 2005. Chairman Dee Pigsley of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians commended the governor for the National Marine Sanctuary letter he had prematurely mentioned on his Web site. The next day, the governor mailed a letter to Sen. Ron Wyden and the Oregon delegation to inform them that he is asking the Secretary of Commerce to designate an Oregon National Marine Sanctuary to provide for the long-term stewardship of the marine environment using ecosystem-based management.

A generation ago, my grandpa's boathouse got away in a flood. We lived in a city and couldn't be there to save it. It would be nice if my grandkids could fish from a boathouse in the same spot, but new "management" probably won't allow me to build there. There is hope for my real dream though. Efforts of Oregonians working together may allow my grandchildren or maybe my great-grandchildren to put some fresh sticks in our fish weir and witness the abundance and diversity last seen by their elders seven generations ago.



**Siletz Tribal
Head Start
Visits the
Portland Area
Office on
Halloween
2006**