

## Public Comment Requested on Distributing Migratory Bird Feathers to American Indians

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comment on a proposal to develop regulations that would allow American Indians to obtain migratory bird parts and feathers of birds other than eagles for religious or spiritual use.

The Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) was published in the June 15 Federal Register.

The EA would assess potential impacts on the natural and human environment that might result from different alternatives for legalizing the acquisition of feathers other than those from eagles, including impacts to American Indian culture and religion.

Currently, no federal regulations govern the acquisition of migratory bird parts by American Indians.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Fish and Wildlife Service's National Eagle Repository distributed migratory bird parts and feathers from birds other than eagles to enrolled members of federally recognized American Indian tribes.

In 1999, the service suspended distribution of non-eagle feathers due to administrative resource constraints. Since that time, it generally has not issued permits to enrolled tribal members for the use of non-eagle feathers in religious and cultural ceremonies.

The service regularly receives inquiries regarding the availability of migratory bird parts and feathers to American Indians for religious and cultural use. It acknowledges the value of this resource in preserving American Indian religion and culture and seeks input on nine topics:

- The sources of the parts and feathers that would be made available
- Criteria or conditions that should be established for eligibility
- How different means of legal acquisition may affect tribes
- How American Indian tribes could be affected if such authorization is extended to others in addition to enrolled members of federally recognized tribes
- The extent of American Indian demand for such feathers and parts
- Whether the types of feathers being requested should be limited to those historically significant to the tribes acquiring them
- Which species of migratory birds are most valuable for American Indian religious/spiritual purposes
- Potential impacts to migratory bird populations and other wildlife; and other concerns about this initiative

The service does not expect to authorize any means of distribution of non-eagle feathers and parts that would affect migratory bird or wildlife populations or impact wildlife habitat, and

does not anticipate taking live birds from the wild through hunting or any other method.

Copies of the Notice of Intent may be found on the service's Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MidwestBird>, or obtained by writing: Andrea Kirk, Permits Administrator, USFWS Migratory Bird Permits, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, MN 55111, or calling 612-713-5436.

Comments must be submitted by Aug. 14 and may be sent via e-mail to [otherfeathers@fws.gov](mailto:otherfeathers@fws.gov), submitted via [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), by fax to 612-713-7179 or by mail to Andrea Kirk at the address above. Please reference RIN 1018-AV14 when submitting comments by any of these methods.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

It manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations.

The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and American Indian tribal governments with their conservation efforts.

It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

### Find Grant Opportunities

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Above: Tribal members wait patiently in line outside the Tribal Community Center during a fish distribution in July. More than 500 packages of spring-run chinook were given out. The fish came from the McKenzie Hatchery and the Dexter Hatchery

Below: Tristen John hands a package of fish to Marty Lockhart while Lavera "Babe" Simmons signs in with Kelley Ellis. (photos by Diane Rodriguez)



### PSU Position Open in Salem

The site coordinator/advisor position for Portland State University's Extended Campus Program at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, Ore., is open.

Responsibilities include recruiting and advising students; participating in advising/recruiting activities, such as new student orientations and classroom presentations; and acting as a liaison between students and PSU departments on campus.

For a full job description and details on how to apply, visit [www.hrc.pdx.edu](http://www.hrc.pdx.edu). Review of applications will begin immediately; position will be open until finalists are identified.

PSU is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity institution and, in keeping with the president's diversity initiative, welcomes applications from diverse candidates and candidates who support diversity.

### Nominations Open for School Board Award

Magna Awards – American School Board Journal (ASBJ) is accepting nominations online for the 2008 Magna Awards through Oct. 1, 2007. Presented in cooperation with Sodexo School Services, winners of the Magna Awards for leadership receive national recognition in a special supplement to ASBJ and are honored at a luncheon at the National School Boards Association's annual conference.

Awards are handed out in three enrollment categories – under 5,000, 5,001 to 20,000, and more than 20,000. Grand prize winners in each category receive a \$3,500 cash award from Sodexo.

Nominations this year are being accepted only online. For more information, call 703-838-6739 or visit [www.asbj.com/magna/](http://www.asbj.com/magna/).