

Tribal Perspectives on the Chehalis Basin –

*The Quinault Indian Nation along with our relatives at the Chehalis Tribe have existed in these lands and waters since time immemorial. Prior to colonization our people freely enjoyed access to the vast natural resources cradled within the Chehalis Basin, developing complex systems of trade, communication, and a way of life that emphasizes not only stewardship but a deep spiritual connection to our territories as placed based peoples.

*As time went on, it became necessary to formalize our relationship with settlers and the new government in order to maintain our way of life. So, on July 1st in 1855 the Quinault River Treaty was signed between leaders and headmen of my nation to formally establish the reservation that many of my citizens reside on today. The treaty has formalized the relationship between QIN and the United States for the last 162 years predating Washington State-hood for just over 34 years. In exchange for the ceding of hundreds of thousands of acres of land to the US Nation State the Quinault Indian Nation reserved the right to hunt, fish and otherwise maintain access to our ceded territories as we always have prior to the treaty.

*It's important to note that treaties are recognized under article 6 of the U.S. Constitution granting them status as the supreme law of the land. With many subsequent judicial decisions and legislative actions that affirm them as so. They do not “expire” and will be maintained as long as the constitution and US remain intact.

*In landmark court case known to many as the Boldt decision or US v. Washington, that QIN was a plaintiff in, it was formally established that tribal nations are co-managers of off-reservation fisheries and that tribal nations are entitled to half of the harvestable numbers of fish returning to Washington waters. The court determined that QIN usual and accustomed territory included all “waters adjacent to their territory”, “Grays Harbor and those streams which empty into Grays Harbor” or “Grays Harbor and its watershed including the Humptulips River”.

***QIN is the only federally recognized indian tribe with Treaty rights in the Chehalis Basin.** The Chehalis River and all of its tributaries empty into Grays Harbor thus making the Chehalis Basin part of QIN's usual and accustomed territories.

Introduction –

*Elected member of the QIN Legislative Body for 7 years serving these past two years as Vice-President, currently serving as chairman of two QIN committees (LNRC & CSC).

*I've spent much of that time as a policy representative focusing on Tribal Self-Governance, Intergovernmental affairs, off-reservation/ocean fisheries, community development, and public education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels.

*Joining me today is Pierre A. our elected 3rd councilperson and Danielle Dan who will serve as a staff coordinator to our internal core team focused on Chehalis Basin Issues.

*It's my goal to fully support the transition of the Governor's workgroup to our newly established office and to collectively develop an integrated Chehalis Basin Strategy that comprehensively protects tribal and non-tribal citizens, infrastructure, and economies from catastrophic flooding.

*Equally important to the development of the CBS is the creation of a Basin-wide approach that restores aquatic species, the vitality of essential ecosystems, and increases the resiliency of habitat in the face of a changing climate. This work is absolutely essential to the QIN and must properly supported by the OCB to be consistent with the Quinault Indian Nation's federally-

reserved treaty rights. This important commitment is also consistent with the statute approved by the legislature creating the OCB and the centennial accord between tribal nations and the State of Washington which QIN is a party to.

*Though our task before us is enormous, I am eager to work closely with the other appointed board members of the OCB to develop a mutually beneficial CBS. Though I serve in this capacity at the pleasure of my nation, I want to be absolutely clear that I do so with an open mind and will do the best I can to understand new perspectives with full faith and credit.

*I remain hopeful that we can find a balanced approach that increases the resiliency of our communities and allows us to be good long-term stewards of our natural resources. This can only be achieved if we commit to utilizing the best available science to inform decision-making, glean wisdom and perspective from the inevitably differing points of view, and most importantly remaining deeply rooted in our shared values, traditions, ways of life with an eye towards our coming generations.