

# Frequently Asked Questions



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### What is tribal sovereignty?

Sovereignty is the authority of a people to govern themselves. Our sovereignty guarantees our inherent right as a government to raise revenue for our community. In fact, 92% of our government services, family and senior housing, education, health and dental services, law enforcement, fire protection, infrastructure improvements, and economic growth are funded from within.

Treaties, court cases, and the U.S. Constitution have upheld Tulalip's status as a self-governing nation.

Today, tribal government and the people of the Tulalip Tribes continue to exercise our sovereignty through a number of initiatives:

- Administering a strong tribal government
- Providing tribal citizens opportunities for education, jobs, land, and housing
- Improving our tribal community to promote physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing and perpetuating cultural and environmental sensitivity
- Building infrastructure on and off the reservation

- Developing the tribe's economic base that provides the primary support for a growing population of young tribal members
- Treaty rights, preservation, access to government to government relationships

### What is the Treaty of Point Elliott?

The 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott reserved specific tribal rights, which were not ceded to the United States. An important provision tribal leaders insisted upon was the right to continue to fish in all usual and accustomed grounds and to hunt and gather on all open and unclaimed lands. These "reserved rights" are rights which were essential to tribal culture, subsistence, and commerce. These rights were not granted in the treaty, rather they were rights that tribes have always possessed and which were protected by the treaty. The Treaty of Point Elliott contains 15 articles. In addition to reserving reservation homelands and tribal rights, the treaty promised education, medical assistance and housing to the tribe.

Since the signing of the treaty, the Tulalip Tribes and

other local tribes have fought continually to uphold our treaty rights.

In 1974, tribes in the region won a major fishing battle in the "Boldt" case (The United States v. Washington). This case reaffirmed the tribe's treaty-protected fishing rights in all our usual and accustomed places and established the tribe as co-managers of the fisheries resource. Later cases affirmed treaty rights to shellfish and treaty protection against destruction of habitat necessary to support the salmon runs.

Since the turn of the century, many commemorations of the treaty have been held on the Tulalip Reservation. Treaty Days occur in our longhouse on or around January 22 every year and always includes speeches on the importance of upholding the treaty. In spite of the hardships brought on by the reservation system and the cession of millions of acres of land, the Tulalip Tribes celebrate the Point Elliott Treaty of 1855 as formal recognition by the United States of the tribe's inherent right to self-determination as a sovereign and distinct people. Under the United States constitution, the treaty is the supreme law of the land and it is as legally binding today as it was the day it was

signed. The treaty continues to support the tribe's sovereign right of self-governance, and the protection of fish, animals, lands and waters on which tribal culture depends.

### Where did the tribe reside prior to contact?

From the Cascades Mountains to the east, the islands of the Puget Sound to the west, as far as Canada to the north and south almost to Tacoma. There were permanent villages along the shores of the salt water at Port Susan, Possession Sound, Saratoga Passage, the Straits, Whidbey Island, Hat Island, and Camano Island and along the banks of the rivers among them—Snohomish, Skykomish, Stillaguamish, Snoqualmie, Goldbar, and Sultan. Our main villages were at Hibulb, Speebidah, Quil Ceda, and around Tulalip Bay.

Trade protected friendships with our neighbors and provided the opportunity to arrange marriage partners between villages. Our ancestors' trade routes went north to Canada, east into the Rockies and south to California. There was a great deal of trade between our ancestors and our neighbors.

### Western Washington

*Traditionally our ancestors resided throughout Western Washington.*



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### Does the Tulalip Tribes own all of the land on the Tulalip Reservation?

No. The Dawes Act of 1887 (also known as the General Allotment Act or the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887), adopted by Congress in 1887, authorized the President of the United States to survey American Indian tribal land and divide it into allotments for individual Indians. The Dawes Act is responsible for enacting the division of the American native reserves into plots of land for individual households, and was created by reformers to achieve six goals:

- Breaking up of tribes as a social unit,
- Encouraging individual initiatives,
- Furthering the progress of native farmers,
- Reducing the cost of native administration,

- Securing parts of the reservations as Indian land, and
- Opening the remainder of the land to white settlers for profit

In 1883, the Tulalip Indian Agency superintendent began to allot the reservation land in 40-, 80-, and 160-acre panels to Tulalip heads of household. In 1906, the Burke Act allowed the issuance of patents in fee to Indian landowners, allowing them to sell their allotments. Due to poverty and outside pressures, much land on the Tulalip Reservation was sold. At this time, about 60% of the Tulalip reservation is Indian owned. In the last few years, the tribe has bought back several thousand of the lost acres and expects to buy more in the future.

In 1936, with money from their own pockets, the first

Tulalip Board of Directors sought ways to support our people. A sustainable cash flow was necessary to start our own businesses. Land leasing along Tulalip Bay was our first venture and it turned out to be profitable.

To lease land meant we also needed to provide basic water and sewer services, which became our next two business projects. This developed a home-based economy that helped draw our people back to the reservation, but hard times were still ahead. A traditional mainstay, logging, was in decline and farming was unsuccessful. Smoke shops and other small businesses provided some income.

### What is an enrolled Tulalip tribal member?

All Tulalip tribal members are descendants of tribes that signed the Point Elliott Treaty.

### Do you have to live on the reservation to be an enrolled Tulalip tribal member?

The tribal member parent has to have resided on the Tulalip Reservation for at least



*Our culture and survival depended on the salmon's annual return.*

12 continuous months at any time prior to the birth of the applicant and be able to prove it.

### What traditional foods did Tulalip people eat?

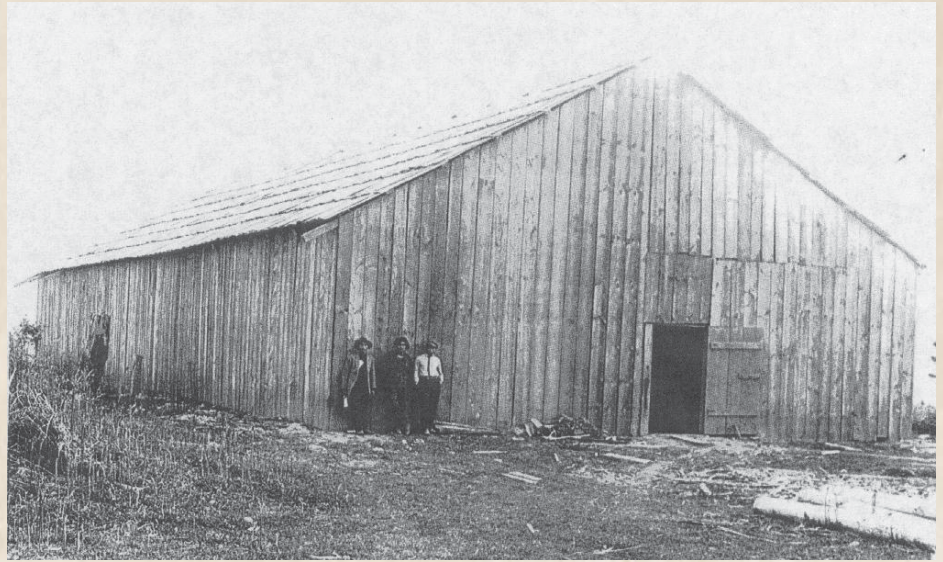
Our ancestors knew what the Puget Sound offered. They would gather shellfish, spear fish, and catch ducks at night. They would set torches on the beach and the bow of the canoes and spear for flounder, skate, and other bottom fish. At night, they would also set flyaway nets for catching ducks and other birds.

One of the most healthy and nutritious ways to prepare a meal was to boil and steam the food. The Coast Salish people made the finest watertight baskets that could be used for cooking. Our people were excellent weavers. Our ancestors

used their watertight baskets to boil salmon and their eggs, all types of shellfish, a variety of fresh and dried meats. Steamers clams and mussels would be cooked on the hot rocks covered with seaweed to trap in the steam. These foods were complimented with nettles, seaweed, wild carrots, and onions. Dried berries were also added to enhance the flavor. They would fill their baskets with water, then add heated rocks from the fire pit to create a gentle boil that cooked the different foods to perfection.

- Fish: five kinds of salmon (spring, humpback, silver, dog, sockeye), steelhead, sturgeon, smelts, herring, flounder, trout, cod, rock cod, and skate
- Shellfish: clams, oysters, barnacles, and crabs

- Eggs: fish eggs from salmon and herring, bird eggs from pheasant, lark, and duck
- Meat: deer and elk meat
- Berries: salmonberries, huckleberries, elderberries, salal berries, blackcaps, blackberries, wild strawberries, and wild raspberries
- Roots and bulbs: brake fern, wood fern, dandelion, cattail, camas, and tiger lily



Everett Public Library or University of Washington photo.

*William Shelton and George Jones Sr. standing in front of the Tulalip longhouse they built, 1913.*

### What is the traditional Tulalip language?

Lushootseed—our sacred first language. To preserve the traditional training and teaching of the people of Tulalip, we aspire to protect its records and become “living records” ourselves who, by speaking, teaching, and involvement in living culture, pass on to the tribal community what we have learned.

The Tulalip Lushootseed Department seeks to preserve records of the language; to promote awareness of and respect for the entire language heritage; to teach the language to tribal members, both in a school setting and in community classes; and, to create a core group of new speakers so that

the sound of Lushootseed can continue to be heard in a chain that goes unbroken back to the very beginning of the language.

### What is the traditional Tulalip home?

#### Longhouses:

- Approximately 100 to 200 feet long
- Cedar planks split from tree trunks and smoothed with an adze
- Shed roof, sloping from one side of house to the other; roof boards located over fires were loose so they could be pushed aside to control the smoke escape
- Some groups divided across into rooms with doors that opened directly outside

- Platforms ran along the side for seating
- Shelves for storage of baskets, tools, clothing, dried foods and other goods were located above platforms, reached by ladders
- Carved house posts
- Cattail mats hung on walls for insulation, put on floors for seating, hung as partitions and used for padded mattresses
- Open place down the middle of the house for walking
- Fires along the sides near seating platforms, shared by two to three families, used for heat and cooking
- Building traditional longhouses involved the community. The head of the family would ask gifted

and experienced people to help build their longhouse. Our people always built their houses on the shores of Puget Sound, along the rivers, and creeks. The main entrance of the houses always faced the water.

The size of the longhouse depended on the family's wealth, their prestige, their extended families, and the number of their friends. All would live in one house. The longhouse had sleeping platforms along the wall.

We used cedar planks to build our houses. The largest big house or cedar plank house of the Snohomish was at Hibulb. It was 115 feet long and 43 feet wide with a single pitch roof. The planks could be adjusted depending on weather conditions. Our ancestors were very skilled at splitting planks from the old growth cedars.

Our ancestors understood migratory patterns like a calendar. Spring and summer gatherings brought families out of their winter villages to travel to their family camping grounds. They built cattail mat houses along the shorelines, islands, rivers, and creeks. Many families joined houses, having a mat house up to thirty feet long.

### **Temporary mat houses:**

- Primarily used in the summers when traveling on hunting or fishing expeditions
- Made from cattail mats over pole supports
- Mats made to be waterproof and overlapped to shed rain
- Mats provided quick way to make a house

### **What is the traditional Tulalip mode of transportation?**

Canoes connected our ancestors to our lands for travel, fishing, gathering shellfish, hunting, trade, and transport. There were large ocean-going canoes and small hunting canoes. Women used canoes for hauling possessions, gathering tules, and many other daily tasks.

### **Why is cedar so important to the tribe?**

The Creator gave our people the cedar as a gift to serve us throughout our lives. Our ancestors, like our people today, offered a prayer to honor the spirit of the tree. We harvest cedar roots, bark, wood, and branches. Cedar is the perfect

resource, providing everything from tools, baskets, and bowls to long-lasting carvings. It has medicinal and spiritual purposes. Every part of the tree is used and nothing is wasted. It touches every part of our lives. Our ancestors taught us the importance of having respect and understanding for how it is to be used. Cedar is to be protected for future generations.

Cedar bark was so versatile that our ancestors used it for every part of their daily life. A freshly pulled piece of bark could be used to make a temporary dwelling at a summer camping place, folded into boxes or canoe bailers, and cut for carving and weaving templates. Women wove cedar bark strips into baskets, mats and hats, or twisted them into rope. They wove shredded strips into capes, skirts, and blankets or bundled them up for babies' diapers. Cedar bark is a critical natural resource.

### **Why is your logo a killer whale?**

Long, long ago at Priest Point, there were two brothers who were famous seal hunters. There was some family trouble and the brothers had to leave Priest

Point and live elsewhere. They went to live in the ocean and became killer whales, in our language. People continued to live at Priest Point, including the descendants of the two brothers. Then something happened. According to one of our storytellers, in the fall and winter of one year, there were some unusual storms and temperature changes, and the people could not put food away as they usually did. By early spring, everything they had stored was gone. There was no game to be found and the people were starving. Just in time, the early salmon run started and the people thought their suffering was at an end.

However, hordes of seals invaded the waters around Priest Point, chasing the salmon and devouring them before the people could catch any. The people were in despair. It was then that they remembered their ancestors, the **qal'qaləxič**. The people called out to them for help, remembering that the two brothers had been expert at getting food for the people. The killer whales heard the peoples' call. They arrived and caught every seal. They ate the seal heads and then tossed the seal bodies onto the beach for the people. In that way, they saved

the people from starvation and preserved the salmon run for coming generations. Another of our storytellers says that the seals used to come frequently in the spring, and that the killer whales were called many times, not just once. But both versions of the story make it clear why the killer whale is important to the Tulalip Tribes. We have been told that if you are in a boat and killer whales come up to you, you can greet them like this: "killer whale, killer whale, your ancestors were also my ancestors."

For more history and information visit [HibulbCulturalCenter.org](http://HibulbCulturalCenter.org)

### What is a boarding school?

In the late 1880s in the Pacific Northwest, the Coast Salish children were taken from their homes to assimilate and civilize them into American society. Indian agents sent children, as young as five years old, to boarding schools across the country.

Teachers brutally punished and ridiculed children for speaking their native language or breaking school rules. The children were marched

everywhere they went. Hard work and manual labor were the way of life at the school. The children were forced to garden, log, sew, cook and clean. Children lived in large communal spaces with no privacy. They often did not have enough food and endured harsh working conditions. Disease spread rampantly and many children died at the school. Others ran away to live with distant relatives. Those remaining endured school but faced a difficult life, haunted by their memories of boarding school.

### When did you become a modern society?

Through the later part of the 19th century and the 20th century, our community became increasingly impoverished due to corruption and greed on the part of the Indian Agency and others. Federal and state governments had imposed laws and regulations on how we were to live and where we could fish, gather and hunt.

In 1934, the federal government passed the Indian Reorganization Act, also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act. This legislation restored self-

government and the ability to manage our lands. We adopted our first Constitution that declared all the people living at Tulalip would be known as the Tulalip Tribes. Our elders determined that adopting a constitution was the best way to serve all our people.

## What is Quil Ceda Village?

Quil Ceda Village, a multi-million dollar commercial development complete with a resort casino, amphitheater and shopping centers. Incorporated as its own municipality, Quil Ceda Village continues to grow, attracting thousands of visitors to its many amenities. Proceeds from our operations continue to support our community. As the village continues to grow, it attracts more than 6 million visitors to its many amenities. The village is dedicated to preserving as much of the natural environment as possible. Within the 450 acres

of commercial land more than 60 acres has been set aside to protect salmon spawning areas and provide walking trails and picnic areas.

We provide jobs for our tribal members and our non-Indian neighbors. We have developed services to meet our community's housing, education and healthcare needs. We support charitable organizations in our area with gaming profits. Nearly three quarters of the hundreds of millions generated by the Quil Ceda Village directly supports the surrounding communities of Marysville, Everett, Arlington, and Snohomish. The Tulalip Tribes is one of the largest employers in Snohomish County. Quil Ceda Village is the first and only IRS-recognized tribal city in the United States. Chartered under tribal laws and governed by a council-manager form of government that enacts local ordinances, builds infrastructure, and manages the tribes' economic development ventures.

