



THE TULALIP TRIBES

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The Tulalip Tribes are the successors in interest to the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, and Skykomish tribes and other tribes and band signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott

The Tulalip Tribes

Representative Rick Larsen
U.S. House of Representatives
107 Cannon Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Larsen:

There is a growing call for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with other federal and state agencies, to implement measures to save and begin to recover the remnant grizzly bear population in the North Cascades. The Tulalip Tribes wish to let you know that we support that goal.

The Tulalip Tribes have long held a cultural connection with the great bear. When our coastal dwelling people journeyed to the highlands, we were very much in the presence of the great bear. One of our elders tells a story of the grizzly bear as his family's medicine. As a young man serving in the Korean War, he credits the grizzly bear with saving a patrol he was leading from a night time ambush.

The Skykomish and Snoqualmie Tribes, who are a portion of the Tulalip Tribes, viewed the Grizzly as a powerful spirit animal and always let them pass when their paths crossed. The women, if picking berries would turn their baskets over and drum them a song, the men would also sing as the bear passed. Traditions like these are part of our heritage, and part of Washington's as well. It would be tragic to lose those connections.

There are perhaps no more than a dozen grizzly bears left in Washington, the only population of grizzlies in the contiguous United States outside of the Rockies. It is our hope that future generations can know of and experience a wild North Cascades shared with grizzly bears rather than a less wild landscape without them.

We hope you will urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to initiate an Environmental Impact Statement addressing the plight of North Cascades grizzly bears and implementing management measures toward saving and recovering this population. We ask that this be done with full respect to our treaty rights and in a way that minimizes any potential access restrictions relative to hunting, gathering, and recreational pursuits.

Sincerely,

Mel Sheldon, Chairman
The Tulalip Tribes