

Council for Tribal Employment Rights



Project Title: Tribal Workforce Protection Act Developmental and Implementation Assistance for Indians/Native Alaskans

Award Amount: \$371,024

Type of Grant: Social and Economic Development Strategies

Project Period: Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2009

Grantee Type: Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 1 elder involved
- 100 youth involved
- \$402,027 in revenue generated
- \$52,320 in resources leveraged
- 584 individuals trained
- 22 partnerships formed
- 1 governance code developed
- 3 governance codes implemented

BACKGROUND

Under current federal law, tribal workforces are not protected by the 1964 Civil Rights Act or Americans with Disabilities Act due to tribal exemptions, jurisdictional lines, and the application of other federal laws on reservations. The gap between federal employment law and tribal laws can expose tribes to complaints of unequal treatment, discrimination, harassment, or fostering a hazardous and hostile work environment.

Founded in 1977, the Council for Tribal Employment Rights (CTER) is a native

nonprofit organization assisting nearly 300 member tribes and Alaska native villages to develop sovereignty-based employment rights strategies that protect the rights of tribal workforces. The CTER is governed by a 16-member Board of Directors comprised of Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO) representatives from across the nation. The CTER provides training for tribes and their TERO representatives in: management and operation of TERO programs; federal law and Indian preference; Indian preference in employment and contracting; tribal workforce utilization and empowerment; and other topics. The CTER has created a model Tribal Workforce Protection Act (TWPA), which tribes and villages may use as a template in creating their own workforce protection legislation.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to help member tribes develop and employ tribal workforce protection legislation to ensure workers on tribal land the full range of workforce rights states and local governments provide their citizens, including the right to family leave

and protections against discrimination based on religion, gender, age, and disability.

Objective one, to be completed by project month six, was to update two manuals involving tribal regulation of employment activities on Indian reservations. The manuals, entitled “The Law and Indian Preference” and “Labor Law, Unions, and Indian Self Determination,” were originally created by CTER counsel in 1979, but needed updating to become consistent with changes in the legal and employment environment. The updates, however, were more challenging than expected, due to major changes in law stemming from the D.C. District Court’s 2007 *National Labor Relations Board vs. San Manuel* decision. Instead of taking six months to complete the updates, CTER counsel took nearly two years.

Objective two, to be completed by the end of year one, was to conduct a “media blitz campaign targeting all of Indian Country” to educate tribal decision makers and TERO officers on the benefits of adopting Tribal Workforce Protection Acts, utilizing Native American newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and websites. As part of the campaign, the CTER also intended to send educational materials, including Model Tribal Workforce Protection Act templates, to over 560 federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native entities. Instead of using these methods, however, CTER planners opted to communicate directly with TERO officers, tribal leaders, and others directly involved in bringing workforce protection laws to reservations and villages.

Objective three, to be completed by the end of year two, was to provide on-site training and technical assistance in the creation and adoption of a model tribal workforce protection act to 16 CTER member tribes. Project staff did this through workshops held at 2 national TERO conventions, attended

by 280 and 230 people respectively; an employment law update conference attended by 180 people; and 8 cluster trainings attended by 195 people. Through these conferences and trainings, the CTER reached out to 584 individuals in all 8 TERO regions. During the project period, 44 tribes with TEROs received technical assistance on the development and implementation of a TWPA.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The CTER set in motion a process by which TERO representatives and tribal leaders learned about the need to develop and expand tribal ordinances to ensure workforce rights for Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and other workers on reservations and in villages. The legal manuals developed by CTER counsel are a tool TEROs and tribal leaders will use to better manage tribal and non-tribal workforces, ensuring tribes take advantage of the new powers and authorities granted to them in the area of workforce protection over the past 30 years. The training provided by the CTER informed participants on the impact of the San Manuel decision and illuminated the importance of adopting comprehensive employment ordinances covering anti-discrimination, occupational safety and health, fair labor standards, and family medical leave. Moreover, it advised tribes to consider to the value and viability of enacting right-to-work laws.

Though only 3 tribes involved in the project adopted TWPAs, many other tribes involved in the project are in the process of creating legislation, and CTER staff expects to see these tribes adopting TWPAs. Through the new laws, tribal employees and other on-reservation employees will have greater protection against discrimination, harassment, unequal pay, as well as greater access to safer, more employee-friendly work environments.

Duwamish Tribal Services



Project Title:	The Lekleh Path: A Pilot Project Between the Duwamish Tribe and Seattle School District
Award Amount:	\$70,125
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Native Nonprofit

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 8 elders involved
- 81 youth involved
- \$375 in revenue generated
- \$675 in resources leveraged
- 3 individuals trained
- 13 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Duwamish Tribe is headquartered in western Seattle and has 569 enrolled members. Because the tribe is not federally recognized, it has operated as Duwamish Tribal Services (DTS), a nonprofit organization, since 1983. DTS is committed to promoting the social, cultural, political, and economic survival of its members, reviving Duwamish culture, and sharing the tribe's history and culture with all peoples.

From 2005 through 2008, DTS raised \$3 million from private and public donors to buy land in western Seattle and to design and build a longhouse and cultural center. The facility was built to preserve, honor, and share Duwamish culture and to earn profits through cultural events and programs. DTS intends to use these earnings to strengthen the social, cultural, political, and economic well-being of the Duwamish community.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to develop and pilot the *Lekleh Path* program, a partnership between the Duwamish Tribe and the Seattle School District providing an ongoing educational field trip program based out of the Duwamish longhouse for urban Native American youth.

The project's first objective was to develop the *Lekleh Path* curriculum and program materials, acquire educational artifacts, and publicize the program in the Seattle school district. Project staff modified a preexisting Duwamish cultural curriculum to fit the needs of the longhouse and cultural center program. The curriculum focuses on

Duwamish culture and history, incorporating a presentation and tour through the museum and historical documents room. Educational artifacts include various models of baskets, blankets, and canoes. These artifacts, all made by Duwamish people, are discussed during the tour, with explanations as to their manufacture, uses, and cultural significance. Project staff encountered challenges early in the project when working with the Seattle school district. Staffing changes and budget constraints resulted in minimal response from the school administrator. In order to overcome this barrier, project staff began promoting the *Lekleh Path* program to native youth programs and tribal schools in the area.

The project's second objective was to select three Duwamish tribal members to fill the role of program facilitators and to deliver the *Lekleh Path* program to 130 Seattle school district Native American students. Project staff identified three tribal members to train as facilitators, or guides for the *Lekleh Path* program. Though turnover in these positions occurred throughout the project, the staff members completed training for three facilitators by the project's end date. Over 130 students toured the longhouse by the end of the project. Participating schools and organizations included the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools, American Indian Heritage High School, the Math Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) program, and the Red Eagle Soaring youth theater group.

The project's third objective was to evaluate the pilot project to determine the possibility for expansion to the surrounding school districts. Due to the challenges working with the school district mentioned above, the project's focus shifted to other programs and target groups for the *Lekleh Path* program. Project staff members still hope to work with the school districts in the future.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The native youth who visit the longhouse benefited from learning more about the culture and history of the Duwamish people. Duwamish youth in particular can identify with the *Lekleh Path* program, which provides them with a sense of identity.

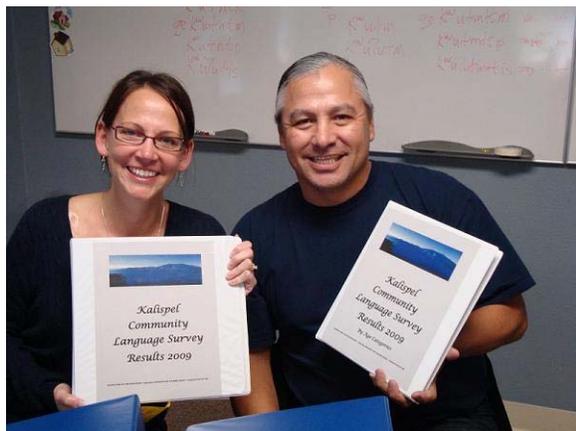
Native parents whose children take part in the program are pleased there is a place they can visit that is sensitive to their needs and also educational. Project staff indicated the longhouse is beginning to become a local gathering place, where urban native youth and their families can go to rejoice in their culture and traditions.

For the non-native population, the longhouse opens a window previously unknown, and provides them with a better understanding of the Seattle area and its history.

"[The longhouse] is a place for youth to come to identify and relate and feel good about it."

Cindy Williams, Project Director

Kalispel Tribe



Project Title:	Kalispel Language Assessment and Planning
Award Amount:	\$64,000
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 4 Native American consultants hired
- 21 elders involved
- 56 youth involved
- \$41,852 in resources leveraged
- 1 language survey developed
- 228 language surveys returned
- 16 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Kalispel Reservation is located in northeastern Washington, where the Kalispel Tribe and its members hold 4,524 acres of land in tribal/individual trust and fee simple lands. There are nearly 400 enrolled members of the tribe, 116 of whom reside on the reservation. There are only a few elderly fluent Kalispel language speakers; most tribal members do not use the language regularly, nor do they regularly participate in language revitalization efforts.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The project's purpose was to assess the status of the Kalispel language and develop community-derived goals and objectives to

increase the Kalispel Tribal Culture Department's capacity to preserve and maintain the language and culture.

The first objective of the project was for the Kalispel Tribe to complete a comprehensive community language survey with input from at least 25% of tribal members above age 16, and to produce a final document summarizing community attitudes about the Kalispel language and identifying semi-fluent and fluent tribal members. To accomplish this, the Culture Department hired a project coordinator, oriented and trained her and other staff on project goals, objectives, activities, and timelines, and gathered and studied sample community language surveys from four other tribes. After conducting a meeting with tribal elders and receiving their support on project goals and the survey format, the coordinator prepared the first draft of the language survey, conducting 4 test groups and administering the test survey to 21 people.

With feedback from elders and the test groups, project staff revised the survey materials. Following these revisions, project staff conducted two pre-survey community meetings – one on the reservation and one off – publicizing survey dates and goals, and

also advertised via local newspapers, email, flyers, and tribal committee meetings. Next, the project coordinator mailed surveys to all enrolled members age 16 and older, and made the survey available at powwows, basketball games, and other community events, both on and off reservation. The Culture Department took the unusual step of including non-tribal members in the survey. The Assistant Director of the Tribal Culture Department stated, “We wanted not only our tribal members to take it, but the community at large and their family members. Doing it this way created trust ... no sense of exclusion. Part of our culture is to include... we wanted to involve the whole community, and also to get non-Indians to understand us and dissolve misconceptions.”

Over a 5-week period, project staff collected 228 completed surveys, including 132 from tribal members (33% of members) and 21 from elders. Survey data were entered in a database by the tribe’s IT department, then clustered and analyzed by project staff. The project coordinator also held 5 focus groups, with 35 participants, to gather more information to complement the survey data. Once the analysis of data was complete, the Culture Department summarized the results in a report and shared this information on CDs with all tribal members over age 16.

Within the first objective, another activity was to acquire, duplicate, and catalog Kalispel language documents, including dictionaries, linguistics journal articles, and language recordings. In this endeavor, project staff acquired 51 unique documents, the most valuable of which were recordings of elders speaking the language in the 1970s. These documents were placed in a new language library, which was publicized via tribal email and the tribal newsletter.

The project’s second objective was to develop and approve comprehensive, community-derived goals and objectives to

guide future language revitalization efforts. To accomplish this, staff held six goal setting meetings with six tribal constituent groups, drafting a five-year vision and goals document. Next, they corresponded with staff from four other tribal language programs to gain feedback and advice on the document, revised the goals, presented them at two community meetings, and revised them again. After further consultation with the Tribal Business Council and experts in Salishan linguistics, second language acquisition, and language revitalization, staff completed short, medium, and long-range objectives, finalized the plan, presented it to the Business Council, and gained Council approval. At that point, the five-year plan became the official policy of the Culture Department and the Kalispel Tribe.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Project staff members consider the survey and planning work conducted during the project to be an important foundation and guide for future language projects, including possible projects on teacher training, curriculum development, and language immersion. They feel that community interest in the language, both on and off the reservation, has increased significantly, and that tribal members, including young people, have done meaningful reflection on why understanding the language is vital to maintaining their cultural identity. The high level of community involvement has also had an impact on program sustainability; the Business Council has increased the level of funding for the Kalispel language program.

According to the project coordinator, “The survey process allowed the tribe to clarify the status of language as it is spoken in the community, gave the Culture Department an idea of what people want and need in order to commit to language revitalization, and generated community excitement and interest in the Kalispel language.”

Nooksack Indian Tribe



Project Title:	Nooksack Indian Tribe Governance Capacity Building Through GIS Mapping of Lands
Award Amount:	\$629,866
Type of Grant:	Social and Economic Development Strategies
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 4 jobs created
- 3 elders involved
- \$143,665 in resources leveraged
- 3 individuals trained
- 23 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Nooksack Indian Tribe is located in Whatcom County, in northwest Washington. Established by the 1846 Oregon Treaty, the tribe has members in both Canada and the United States. There are approximately 1870 US tribal members, 60 percent of whom are under 30.

The reservation consists of 303.4 acres of fragmented tribal lands, and about 2000 acres in private allotments. These lands are largely unmapped, and any existing maps predate digital technology. During the recent drafting of the tribe’s strategic plan, it became clear modern land management is a necessity in order to address current socio-economic challenges.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to create a mapping division within the tribal planning department and initiate modern land management practices.

The project’s first objective was to begin the process of digital identification of tribal lands including reservation, fee, and trust lands. The new mapping division was not established until late summer due to staff turnover and recruiting difficulty. Once established, staff in the new division began entering current data into the new GIS software purchased by the tribe. The surveyor obtained as many land records and as much existing historical information as possible to identify what needed to be included in the digital surveys and provide cross-references for the new data. These documents included lists of tribal trust lands from Whatcom County, pictometry data and aerial photographs, as well as previous land surveys from the Department of Natural Resources and the Bureau of Land Management. Surveyors began surveying the tribe’s northern allotment lands, but soon discovered there were significant

discrepancies leading to boundary conflicts due to the various methods in which the data had been previously collected and reported. These conflicts caused further delays in finalizing the digital identification of tribal lands. While project staff entered all the new information into the GIS database, the two-year project timeframe did not allow for resolution of all the boundary conflicts as this process requires working with the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The project's second objective was to survey and map cultural, natural, and man-made resources on the previously surveyed and mapped lands. Project staff worked with tribal elders to identify and map cultural features, and then collaborated with the tribal language department to create a map with traditional place names labeled in the native language.

The project's third objective was to train two tribal members in GPS, GIS, and survey techniques, with one trainee receiving formal academic training during the project's second year. Two tribal member trainees accompanied the surveyor to obtain hands-on surveying experience including training in safety issues, equipment setup and use, and awareness of environmental challenges. The trainees both began classes through Bellingham Technical College's Surveying and Mapping Technology program in the project's second year.

The project's final objective was to develop and implement an educational program on the value of wills and maps of land parcels to encourage the equitable distribution of inherited land. The project director created a wills education coordinator position for the project, but due to the sensitive nature of discussing wills and land inheritance the tribe did not support the position and it remained unfilled. This objective was therefore not completed.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Due to the challenges mentioned above regarding boundary issues, the impact of the land surveys has yet to be felt on the community level. However, a good infrastructure is in place on the northern properties and the surveyor completed work on most of the tribal trust lands. As the project staff entered all the new information into the GIS database, the Nooksack Tribe is well-positioned to begin plans for disaster management strategies and law enforcement regulations. The tribal administration will also be able to better manage tribal development sites, as the database contains information on roads and utilities.

For tribal members, there is an increased awareness and knowledge of land boundaries and their importance in everyday life. More tribal members understand how land boundaries affect their decisions to modify their homes and develop their land.

The two surveyor trainees gained valuable skills useful in survey and mapping work. Both trainees received academic credit for the classes they completed, and one trainee hopes to continue his studies to receive a bachelor's degree in environmental science.

Nooksack Indian Tribe



Project Title:	Nooksack Indian Tribe Lhechelesem Revitalization Planning Project
Award Amount:	\$73,593
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2008 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 1 job created
- 12 elders involved
- 120 youth involved
- \$120,871 in resources leveraged
- 15 partnerships formed
- 100 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 50 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

The Nooksack Indian Tribe is located in Whatcom County, in northwest Washington. Established by the 1846 Oregon Treaty, the tribe has members in both Canada and the United States. There are approximately 1870 US tribal members, 60 percent of whom are under 30.

Lhechelesem is the ancestral language of the Nooksacks and is part of the Central Coast Salish language group. Currently, there are eight surviving individuals who speak and/or understand Lhechelesem of whom only one is fluent. There are no first language speakers left. Prior to this project,

a linguist worked with the Nooksack tribe to develop orthography, phrenology and morphology for the Lhechelesem language. The linguist also developed a formal K-6 curriculum for the tribe.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to continue to develop educational programs that will allow the tribe to revitalize the Lhechelesem language in one generation.

The project's sole objective was to develop and test cultural activities for the preexisting K-6 Lhechelesem curriculum. The main approach of the project was to reintroduce and incorporate the traditional 13 moons calendar as a means of teaching the Lhechelesem language. This approach resulted from prior experiences of the language department developing curricula that was never used. The project staff believes the novel idea of a "natural approach," where all language lessons and activities follow the traditional calendar combines enhanced language learning with education on the Nooksack culture. This cultural approach also draws heavily upon the total physical response (TPR) language teaching method. Project staff modified the

existing curriculum to associate every lesson with activities conducted during each of the 13 moons. For example, project staff incorporated preexisting text and vocabulary focused on harvesting and berry picking with the appropriate moon when blackberry picking occurs. That lesson will then be taught during the actual blackberry harvest, and will include field trips to educate students on the cultural significance of traditional berry picking. Once developed, the project staff tested the comprehensive curriculum at five village sites by means of after school sessions. These “classes” included discussion of current moon activities and focused on oral and aural learning rather than written methods. During the summer, project staff also tested the curriculum at the tribe’s summer youth program. Project staff used these test sessions as a means of adjusting the curriculum to be more effective, based on student feedback and real-life teaching experiences. Project staff then compiled the lessons into one completed curriculum, available in digital and hard copy formats.

The project also included activities to develop language teacher certification protocols for the tribe. Project staff collaborated with the Puyallup Tribe’s language department to develop teacher training application forms and lists of required teacher competencies. These and other documents will form the basis of a Lhechelessem language certification program.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The natural teaching approach, combined with use of TPR methods, helps tribal youth understand the function of the Lhechelessem language. The curriculum provides them with ownership of their language as they relate each lesson to an activity they, or their families, participate in each year. The 13 moons curriculum also teaches youth about

cultural traditions and the history of their people.

The Nooksack Tribe benefited from the education of all tribal departments regarding the importance of using the language at work. Many departments now request the language staff’s participation in tribal events, such as the dedication of buildings, in order to perform traditional ceremonies in Lhechelessem. Project staff encourage finding ways to incorporate the language into the everyday activities of all tribal departments.

Finally, the development of the 13 moons curriculum is an important step in preserving the Lhechelessem language. Along with the curriculum, project staff worked to develop the foundation for a teacher certification program. During the testing of the 13 moons curriculum, project staff identified possible candidates for future certification, helping to ensure the continuance and expansion of the Lhechelessem language program.

“We have piqued the interest of the community. We are losing our elders, but are carrying on. Our songs and language and culture and history are coming back and are being honored again.”

George Adams, Project Director

Skokomish Tribe



Project Title:	Skokomish Tribe Environmental Research Project
Award Amount:	\$258,054
Type of Grant:	Environmental
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Dec. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 7 elders involved
- 1 youth involved
- \$14,400 in resources leveraged
- 3 individuals trained
- 14 partnerships formed

BACKGROUND

The Skokomish Indian Tribe, with 703 enrolled members, is located on the 5,000 acre Skokomish Indian Reservation. The reservation is on the delta of the Skokomish River, which empties into the Hood Canal on Washington's Olympic Peninsula. The Hood Canal, the traditional, historical, and contemporary source of social, cultural, and economic livelihood for the Skokomish people, is in a state of environmental crisis.

In recent decades, upriver forest, residential, and agricultural land use practices, along with more frequently occurring storm events, have contributed to more frequent flooding and higher groundwater tables, in turn causing livestock waste, human waste (through failed septic systems), fertilizers, and other contaminants to be released into

the river and the Hood Canal. The water quality degradation in the canal, which is also caused by hydro-electric damming that has diverted 40% of the Skokomish River, has led to algae blooms, fish kills, dead zones in the canal, diminished fish and shellfish populations, and reduced potential income for 491 tribal harvesters.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to build the Skokomish Tribe's capacity to protect resources through tribally-directed research projects on dissolved oxygen, invasive species, water quality, and habitat. This research would inform an invasive species management plan and two aquatic resources enhancement plans, improving water quality, enhancing habitat, and mitigating threats to fisheries. Additionally, the project would educate the Skokomish people in conservation science and fisheries and facilitate collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal agencies.

The first objective of this project was to develop an invasive species management plan that would: identify invasive species and the problems they cause; devise strategies to map, monitor, control, and

eradicate them; and prevent new species from being introduced. Though the aquatic biologist hired for the project did not begin until five months into the project period, he was able to procure needed equipment, review existing information on invasive species in the area, conduct a literature review, develop field methods, conduct field work, document a baseline of existing invasive species, collect and analyze data, draft and revise several versions of an Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, complete a final plan, and receive Tribal Council approval of the plan by the project's 13th month. Also, he was able to review information on fisheries, shellfish, and water quality, meet regularly with the tribe's Fish Committee to discuss shellfish and fisheries enhancement priorities and invasive species management, and begin water quality research.

The second project objective was to create a Fisheries Enhancement Plan and a Shellfish Enhancement Plan by the 24th month of the project. To accomplish this, the project director hired an assistant to the aquatic biologist. The assistant, also an aquatic biologist by training, proved highly capable and began working on the project not as an assistant, but as a co-collaborator. The two aquatic biologists cross-trained each other in shellfish and finfish field methods and analysis, and each took on the task of writing one enhancement plan. Throughout the project, they collaborated with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure the use of proper field methods and protocols, ensure the completion of lab work, and produce detailed plans. They also hired a tribal youth worker, who helped with invasive plant eradication, shellfish surveys, and other tasks. By the end of the project period, they had finished both plans, with approval by the Skokomish Tribal Council.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Project staff and Skokomish tribal leaders believe the knowledge and experience gained through project research have increased the capacity of the tribe to preserve resources, and have given the tribe a more clear understanding of what it must do to combat aquatic nuisance species, enhance tribal fisheries, and clean up the Skokomish watershed and Hood Canal. The project has pulled many tribal resource management plans together, facilitating cooperation between people previously working apart, simplifying their work now and in the future. If the strategies developed are effectively pursued, the tribe will better be able to restore the health of vital ecosystems and to pursue the economic and cultural interests of the tribe, and tribal members will again be able to pursue activities such as growing sweetgrass for use in basket making, or harvesting salmon and shellfish to the extent they once did.

By increasing cooperation with interagency and intergovernmental environmental coordinating groups, the project team helped establish the tribe as a strong and consistent presence in local and regional conservation efforts, and have enabled the tribe's research and management priorities to be better represented at policy and decision-making tables. This has given agencies greater confidence in the tribe's capacity to deal with environmental problems in areas under tribal control.

Project staff members feel that over the long term, these efforts will eradicate invasive species and mitigate damage to the ecosystem, resulting in a greater abundance and diversity of species, more employment opportunities, improved public health, and more recreational activities for tribal members and others in the region.

Spokane Tribe of Indians



Project Title:	Spokane Tribal Language Program
Award Amount:	\$259,197
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2007 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 3 jobs created
- 30 elders involved
- 385 youth involved
- \$45,304 in resources leveraged
- 12 individuals trained
- 4 partnerships formed
- 3 language teachers trained
- 350 native language classes held
- 385 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 18 adults increased their ability to speak a native language
- 1 language survey developed
- 25 language surveys returned

BACKGROUND

The Spokane Tribe is a federally recognized tribe with 2,465 enrolled members, located on the Spokane Indian Reservation in northeastern Washington. Rural and remote, the reservation consists of 155,000 acres of mostly mountainous timberland, and has a population of 1,200 people.

Though the tribe's language program provides classes for Head Start through 5th grade students and college students, there are not enough teachers to meet the needs of all age groups and levels. In recent years, the tribe has had only three teachers, who have had to teach 17 classes. Thus, some students, including junior high and high school students, who currently do not receive language classes, have been left feeling marginalized.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to increase the number of teachers qualified to instruct in the Spokane language, and to develop multi-tiered curricula and lesson plans for classroom use and student self-instruction.

The project's first objective was to create language lesson plans and curricula for teachers and students, as well as self-guided lesson plans for students of various ages. To accomplish this, the project manager hired two student teachers, identified their training needs, and provided the student teachers and four elder language specialists with training on curriculum development, lesson plan development, and teaching methodology. Working with the elders, student teachers

began developing curricula and lesson plans, completing over 200 lesson plans during the project period. By project's end, the team had distributed a booklet and CD including nearly 200 lessons to community members.

The second objective was to train two new language teachers, increasing the number of tribal members qualified to teach the language. To do this, student teachers worked about 3 days per week with language teachers and 7-8 times per quarter with elders, studying language skills such as writing, grammar, pronunciation, and conversation, and teaching skills such as how to design curricula and lessons, and how to present lessons using suitable language teaching methods. The student teachers kept language journals and portfolios, taught mock lessons to elders, took speaking and writing tests, and were evaluated on an ongoing basis by elders and tribal teachers. Student teachers also attended college language classes and immersion training at Flathead Immersion School. Though one of the two student teachers originally involved in the program resigned during the first year, the tribe was able to find a replacement, who completed sufficient training to meet the training goals set forth by project planners.

The third objective of the project was to expose approximately 1,600 tribal members to the Spokane language, through new and innovative channels not previously available, including an interactive website. The primary interactive feature of the website was a set of eight self-guided lessons focusing on alphabet, clothing, counting, colors, seasons, animals, food, and days of week. These lessons allowed students to study online, build vocabulary, and increase basic speaking skills. The language website also provided Spokane language songs and stories, and information on the language program, links, and news. In two years, there were 4,876 visits to the

website, about a third of which came from students at the tribal elementary school. The Tribal Business Council passed a resolution allowing tribal employees to logon to the website for two hours per week, so they could study the language during work hours.

Project staff also published announcements about the project in the tribal newspaper and conducted various outreach activities, hosting public meetings and incorporating language activities into various annual events. In addition to the 390 youth and 30 elders attending these events, hundreds of parents, family members, and other tribal members attended. Staff also conducted a language survey in which 25 members of the tribe identified "perceptions and preferences for the future of the program."

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

The two newly trained student teachers have been certified by the Tribal Business Council and hired by the tribe. Though they have not yet been certified by the state, they have begun to work in their own classrooms, with the Head Start and the tribal day care programs. They have also begun substituting for regular language teachers, occasionally working with older, higher level students. Using advanced active language teaching methods and self-developed lesson plans, the new teachers are poised to serve the tribal community for many years to come.

The increased visibility of the Spokane language program has enabled it to build a stronger relationship with the community and to reach new constituencies. Project team members feel that this enhanced relationship, combined with the program's expanded capacity to deliver language training to tribal members, bodes well for the revitalization of the Spokane language and its restoration to a central place in Spokane tribal culture.