

but marked the culmination of several decades of litigation. It finally reached the US Supreme Court in 1979 by the Passenger Fishing Vessel Association case. The Boldt Decision affirmed that the treaties were alive and well. The states had an obligation to abide by the treaties, and that the tribes had not only a right to an enforceable property right to a share of the harvestable surplus of different species of salmon and other fish but were also comanagers of shared resources.

### What are misconceptions the general public has about tribal sovereignty?

The principal misconception is that sovereignty was given to the tribes by the United States. Tribes have inherent and inalienable rights as political sovereigns that predate the political establishment of the United States. In fact, many people don't realize that the foundations of modern democracy and the concept of the United States itself are rooted in the Constitution of the Iroquois League of Nations, which is known as the Great Law of Peace.

That was adopted in the 1100s by the five civilized tribes: the Mohawk, Onondaga, Seneca, Oneida, and Cayuga tribes. That gave the framers of the constitution the idea of a confederacy, bringing the different colonies together as a union. Congress recognized the contributions of tribes in providing a foundation for the United States when it passed House Concurrent Resolution 331 in 1988.

The challenge that many tribes have faced over the years is that they have to constantly reeducate—the general public, politicians, economists, educational institutions, and their neighbors—that the tribes have been here for a long time. They've been here for many generations and depend on long-term relationships. The short-lived political, leadership, and economic structures have forced tribes to continually explain who they are and defend their rights.

What people also don't know about tribes is that they are part of the American system of governance that was enshrined in the U.S. Constitution

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## Editor's Note

By Andrea Watts

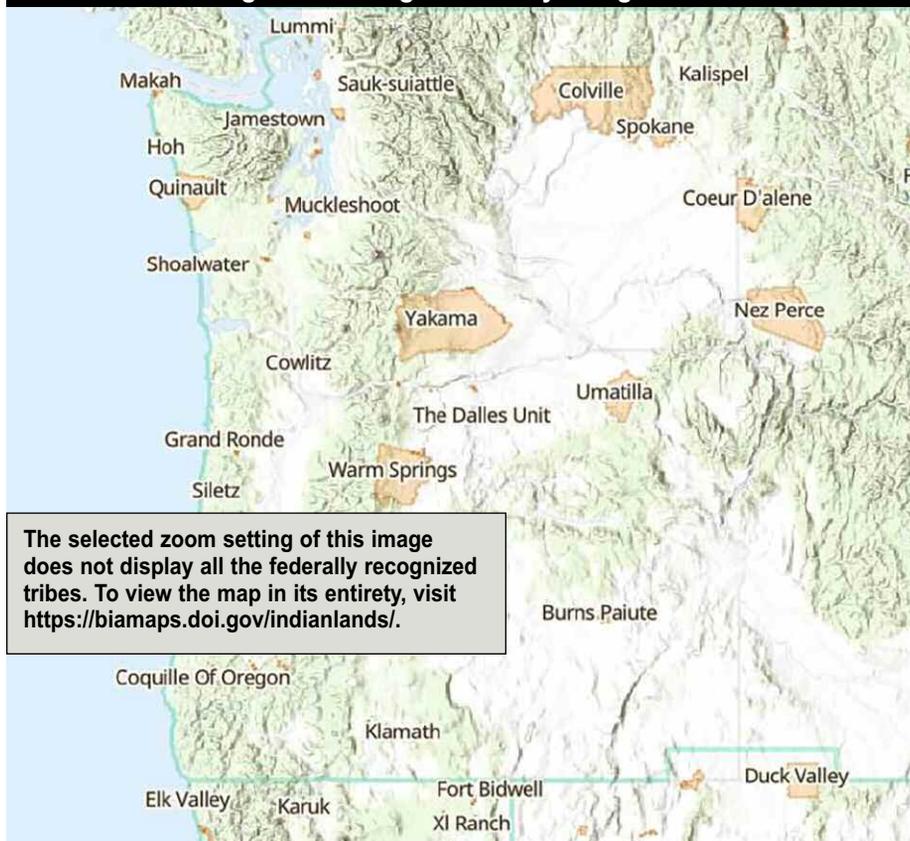
Each issue of the *Western Forester* is a collaboration between myself and the authors who volunteer to contribute an article, but this issue on tribal forestry has other collaborators who deserve mention. Don Motanic, a technical specialist with the Intertribal Timber Council, and Stephanie Cowherd, the forests and community program director with Ecotrust, served as guest associate editors by identifying stories to feature and coordinating interviews and articles. Don even contributed two articles! After I finished editing Christopher Villarruel's profile, his closing sentence, "And for anybody who is interested in tribal forestry, it is important to first familiarize yourself with tribal sovereignty," I realized that such an article was needed in this issue. Gary Morishima was gracious to grant me an interview on short notice.

These stories are also just a fraction of the ongoing work in the space of tribal forestry, which sparked a second realization: I need to be more proactive in featuring this work in other issues rather than waiting until the theme of tribal forestry is selected again.

And speaking of *Western Forester* themes, in June the NWO committee will select the themes for 2022. If there is a forestry or natural resources topic you want to learn more about, please send in your suggestions to [watts@forestry.org](mailto:watts@forestry.org).

As always, thank you to all the people who were interviewed or contributed articles to this issue. The *Western Forester* would not be possible without these volunteer efforts. And many thanks to the loyal advertisers who continue to support this publication, as well as the PNW SAF members. *WF*

### Washington and Oregon federally recognized tribes



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