

Partners Come Together to Protect Two Food Systems Under Threat

Tulalip Tribes and Washington Farmland Trust partner to protect farmland and critical fish habitat along the Skykomish River

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Since time immemorial, the Skykomish River watershed has provided bountiful salmon runs and cultural significance to many Indigenous communities, including the Tulalip Tribes. Today, the Tulalips have acquired 117 acres and over 2 miles of riverfront habitat along the Skykomish from Washington Farmland Trust.



This land will be protected forever thanks to a pivotal initial conservation effort that took place in 2018, when Washington Farmland Trust raised \$3.4 million in private donations and impact investment funds to purchase and protect a 260 acre piece of land known as Reiner Farm. This property includes prime agricultural land as well as swaths of forest and valuable salmon spawning and rearing habitat along the Skykomish River and Haskel Slough. For more than 20 years, the Tulalip Tribes have been collecting data on endangered salmon at this very site to guide fishery management and strategies to help salmon populations recover. In addition, this effort directly supports the Tribes' Tualco Valley Connectivity Project, which aims to create more off-channel habitat for salmon along Haskel Slough and the Skykomish River, allowing the endangered species to access critical habitat and seek refuge during flood events.

"Though our communities are often pitted against one another, farmers and Tribes are raising food in the same environment, and we both know what it means to live with the land," said Teri Gobin, Chairwoman of the Tulalip Tribes.

"This project is a shining example of two groups coming together to protect the systems we both rely upon."

For more than a century, the Reiner family farmed the land, until Dale Reiner sold it to Washington Farmland Trust shortly before his passing in 2019. Today, Werkhoven Dairy is the current tenant and long-term steward of the agricultural portion of the land, where they currently grow silage crops for their dairy cows.

“We are honored to work in partnership with the Tulalip Tribes toward our shared goals of natural resource conservation, and to ensure that the important salmon recovery and food sovereignty efforts that have been in place for so long can continue in this critical landscape,” said Robin Fay, Conservation Director for Washington Farmland Trust.

Both organizations look forward to deepening their partnership in the years to come, and offer our thanks to the Land Trust Alliance PNW Resilient Landscapes Initiative and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for their support in funding this project.

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About Washington Farmland Trust

Washington Farmland Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and accredited land trust that protects and stewards threatened farmland across the state. We keep land in production by making it accessible to a new generation of farmers. Since our founding more than 20 years ago, we have conserved 32 farm properties, totaling 3,413 acres.

About Tulalip Tribes

The Tulalip (Tuh'-lay-lup) Tribes are direct descendants of and the successors in interest to the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish, and other allied bands signatory to the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott. The treaty reserved the Tulalip Indian Reservation as a permanent homeland over which the tribe has retained inherent sovereign jurisdiction.

Lindsey Watkins

Tulalip Tribes

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