From: Delbert Miller
To: MakahDEIS.nwr@noaa.gov;
Subject: comments on treaty righs to hut whale
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The Makah tribe should be allowed to hunt whale on their terms based on cultural and spiritual life styles, and the agreement in the treaty for the Makah's retain and maintain their life style by hunting whales. The article states the whales are in a stable pattern at this time. The culture of the tribe is based on a faith and love of all food sources from shell fish, land game and whales. They live the culture; it is not a lost or forgotten life style. I have seen their dances and ceremonies, listened to their teachings and prayers about the whales. They have deep respect for the whales. They have retained the right to hunt whales, they never gave it away, nor did the treaty give them the right, 'they retained the right' to hunt them and they agreed to stop due to the numbers getting low from over harvesting by the outside world, not over harvesting by the Makah's. The fact they agreed to stop hunting the whales is a sign of respect for the whales, and to societies concerns for the numbers of whales. The whales will provide food of course to the tribe but it will also provide a cultural food for the foundation or soul of the tribe as well. The idea that one race has control of another's culture is a travesty and a frightening aspect of the white society over all indigenous people. Should a race be in control of the Makah's culture? I resoundingly say 'hell no!' The idea is to look at the history of the tribes, and how long they have hunted whales. The number of years would be thousands of years longer than the development many of the European countries, and the coming of Jesus and all of Christianity, let alone the United States. I am all for the United States, but I am opposed to the condescending nature and attitude of the United States toward the first people living within this great country. The United States needs to begin supporting and respecting indigenous cultures to include the food they eat. Not taking them to court time and time again. One only has to look at the Judge Boldt decision and later rulings over shell fish harvesting. All those hearings over food the tribes have held sacred.
Thank you
Delbert Miller
Skokomish Tribe