

**THE COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP PROJECT:
PRESERVING COLLABORATIVE NATURAL RESOURCE POLICY MAKING IN WASHINGTON STATE**

The Need

Collaborative approaches have led to many groundbreaking natural resource policy outcomes in Washington state such as the Timber/Fish/Wildlife (TFW) and Forest & Fish agreements;



Chelan Agreement for water resource management; Tribes & Counties Intergovernmental Cooperation Project; Puyallup Land Claims Settlement; watershed management in places like the Nisqually Basin; Columbia River Salmon Recovery Boards; Shared Strategy for Salmon Recovery in Puget Sound and its predecessors; Puget Sound Partnership; Walla Walla Water Management; Yakima Basin Integrated Plan; Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force; and others. As it approaches the 50-year mark, there is agreement this history is unique, and capturing it is important for preserving our legacy and knowledge.

But it is perhaps even more important for what it can teach current leaders and the next generation (not to mention the rest of the country and world) about how to do this important and challenging work, and make this type of progress. And yet no such history exists to provide this guidance. No one has assembled the stories of the issues, outcomes, and impacts of these landmark collaborations. No one has profiled the important figures involved, and added observations and insights about where we have been, and where we are going.



And now we are losing the remarkable leaders who first made these accomplishments possible. Those already gone include Nisqually leader and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) Chair Billy Frank, Jr; Shared Salmon Strategy, Puget Sound Partnership, and Ruckelshaus Center Chair Bill Ruckelshaus; Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and NWIFC Chair Lorraine Loomis; Quinault Indian Nation President Joe DeLaCruz; Washington Forest Protection Association Director Stu Bledsoe; The Tulalip Tribes leader Terry Williams; and others. Others are retiring, taking their knowledge with them.

Now is the time to capture these histories and tell the story, so that we continue to benefit from the efforts of those who came before us, who worked so hard to establish better ways to resolve the complex challenges posed by natural resource management. This history provides a wealth of experience and examples of how to build relationships and collaboratively solve public problems. We need to convey this information to current and upcoming leaders, so they can understand, appreciate, and preserve this history, put their own stamp on it, and continue to address challenges this way.

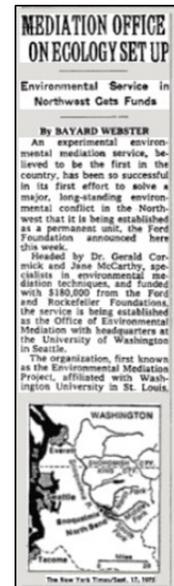
The Origins



Indian people have always relied on the natural resources of this land. When westward expansion of European settlers reached what is now the State of Washington, Tribes chose to reserve in the Stevens Treaties of 1854-55 what was most important to them -- the right to continue to fish, hunt, and gather in their traditional places. But as more settlers arrived and resource use expanded in the 19th and 20th centuries, tensions grew, and conflict escalated.

In 1974, federal Judge George Boldt ruled that those treaties entitled the Tribes to half of the harvestable salmon and steelhead “in common with the citizens of the state,” redirecting the long-running “Fish Wars” toward a decade of legal appeals. At about the same time, Gerald Cormick and Jane McCarthy successfully mediated a dispute over a flood control dam on the Snoqualmie River in western Washington. This is usually considered the first application of alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

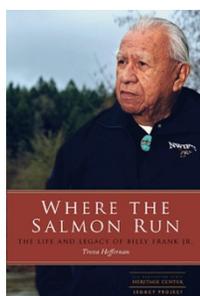
methods to a multiparty, natural resource policy challenge in the US. Over the next decade, Cormick served as director of the University of Washington's (UW) Environmental Mediation Project. Jon Brock joined him at what is now the UW Evans School of Public Policy and Governance in 1981. Alice Shorett established Triangle Associates, Inc. in Seattle in 1979. Emmett Fiske, Kelsey Gray, Kay Haaland, and others at Washington State University (WSU) Extension began to train mediators and resolve environmental conflicts. In 1980, a cooperative management agreement was reached between the State of Washington and the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Then in 1984, Jim Waldo formed the non-profit Northwest Renewable Resources Center (NRRC) to facilitate creation of the co-management relationship between Washington and all its Treaty Tribes, when the Boldt decision was unanimously upheld by the US Supreme Court.



All this helped spur the birth of collaborative natural resource policy making across the country. But Washington remained a leader, as these early activities were followed over the decades by the significant processes mentioned above, and many others. Leaders from the public, private, and non-governmental sectors participated in these processes, representing diverse constituencies. Federal, tribal, state, and local governments worked with agricultural, environmental, commercial, industrial, community, and many other types of interests to seek agreement. Private firms and sole practitioners emerged to serve as third-party facilitators and mediators for these types of processes. Washington became a hotbed for talented practitioners. Universities continued to play an important role, including the establishment of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center at WSU and UW in 2004, to foster collaborative public policy, including on natural resource issues. Aided by many accomplished private-, public-, and NGO-sector practitioners, this legacy of multiparty natural resource collaboration continues to this day.

Phase 1: Capturing the Histories

The first step in preserving this legacy is to capture the narratives of those who were there when this history was made. The first priority is oral history interviews with conveners, sponsors, participants, and practitioners from landmark natural resource collaborations. These interviews could be conducted by a project lead and other researchers/professionals, with the support of graduate assistants. The goal will be to capture and document as much insight, and as many recollections, as possible, before anything else is lost to retirements, fading memories, or more losses. An essential element will be consulting American Indian Tribes as to whether and, if so how, they want to be involved in the project. Capturing their histories cannot be done without them. If possible and appropriate, the oral histories would be filmed, so they can be used not only for written histories, but also for video and audio histories, as described below.



Another priority would be a search for existing relevant source materials, conducted by the project lead, supported by a project researcher and graduate research assistants. A limited number of primary source materials are already evident. For example, in 2011, TV-W captured oral history interviews between historian Douglas Brinkley and Bill Ruckelshaus on behalf of the Ruckelshaus Center; these are archived in the UW and WSU Libraries Special Collections. Over the last decade or so, Legacy Washington in the Secretary of State's Office has published biographies of Billy Frank, Jr., Dan Evans,



Booth Gardner, and John Spellman; the *“We’re Still Here: The Survival of Washington Indians”* exhibit; and the LegacyMakers biographical database. HistoryLink’s profiles include several of the individuals mentioned above, and other relevant parties. And Jon Brock, working with graduate students, has over the years drafted case studies on a number of prominent natural resource collaborations, which he has offered to make available to this effort.

Phase 2: Telling the Story



Capturing these oral histories of collaboration in Washington will be an important accomplishment in itself, and represent a valuable resource. So, the second phase will include an effort to determine how to make the resulting oral histories and other source materials available long-term, perhaps by organizing and providing them to the UW and/or WSU libraries’ special collections, which already house the Bill

Ruckelshaus oral history. With oversight from the project lead, this can primarily be a task for graduate research assistants.

The second phase will focus on turning the resulting source material into compelling history, in one or more formats. The first of these formats will be a documentary film that tells the story of natural resource collaboration in Washington, from the time of the Boldt Decision to the present day, focusing on examples of collaborative processes that collectively tell the story, and in the words of those who were part of those processes, or (in the case of those who are gone), people who can speak for them and pass on their memories.

Such a documentary could serve as an outstanding way to commemorate important upcoming milestones such as the 50th anniversary of the Boldt Decision, the 40th anniversary of the salmon co-management relationship between the state and the tribes, the unveiling of a statue of Billy Frank, Jr in the Washington state section of the US Capitol Rotunda, and the Ruckelshaus Center’s 20th anniversary, all in 2024. There is also the 50th anniversary of collaborative natural resource policy in WA (and therefore in the US) in 2025.



Some oral history interviews could be conducted as a group events, featuring a practitioner, participant, convener and/or sponsor panel on a particular process. And ultimately, there could be a book – an interesting and compelling written account that preserves the most salient historical facts, and tells the story in a manner that holds the reader’s attention and conveys the importance and interest of this period, these events, and the people involved.

The Project Lead



Michael Kern is an Affiliate Associate Professor at the UW Evans School, Adjunct Associate Professor at WSU Extension, Adjunct Professor at Seattle University, Principal of Michael Kern Consulting, LLC, and Director of Special Projects at UW’s Center for Urban Waters (CUW). In 2021, he wrapped up 12 years as Director of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, a joint effort of WSU and UW that fosters collaborative public policy, including on natural resources.

Michael sees this project as a collaboration itself, one that would require a robust partnership in order to be successful. But while needing partners to make this opportunity a reality, Michael is well positioned to provide leadership. An excellent researcher, interviewer, and writer, he has more than 30

years of experience, and a national reputation, as both a practitioner and an academic in the field of collaborative governance. He began his career at NRRC, working with a remarkable Board of Directors plus Amy Solomon, Frank Gaffney, Shirley Solomon, Betsy Daniels, and others on several of the landmark collaborative processes mentioned above. In addition to private practice, and leading large-scale collaborative processes for non-profit organizations, he has done so at both UW and WSU, and has been a Senior Associate at Triangle Associates.

Michael has the relationships and knowledge to orchestrate this complex undertaking, but also the distance and perspective that accompany experiencing this history as a third-party mediator/facilitator and “pracademic,” rather than a party to these challenges. More information about Michael, including a detailed resume/CV, is available upon request.



Project Home/Funding/Launch Period/Partners

CUW is interested in serving as a base for this project, a good fit given its role as a “boundary spanning” organization, building collaboration through good information and outstanding communication in support of state and federal agencies, tribes, and other organizations. In addition, CUW has not been directly involved as a convener, sponsor, participant, or practitioner in the collaborative processes likely to be profiled in the project.

CUW estimates that funding the two-year effort will require \$625,000. This estimate includes support for the Project Lead, a Project Researcher, three graduate student Project Assistants, two pro bono Project Advisors, plus travel and other direct costs. It also includes a funding to retain the services of a video production firm.

CUW is looking for partners to help it fund the project. CUW invites other institutions, schools, departments, universities, public or private foundations, or private donors to join it in a partnership, which may involve funding, the involvement of graduate student researchers, and/or other forms of support or involvement. Federal, state, tribal, and local governments, as well as non-governmental and private organizations, may be interested in helping preserve this history, as their senior leaders are retiring, their history is at risk, recognition of the gains made through collaboration may be fading, and important milestones that this project could help commemorate are approaching.

CUW is currently seeking \$125,000 in early gifts to fund a project launch period that would provide time for the Project Lead and Project Advisors to flesh out the project scope and budget, line up project supporters and partners, identify additional background information, conduct early interviews that help demonstrate the value of the project, and solicit larger-scale project funding. Launch period funding secured to date includes generous gifts from Anchor QEA, the Nisqually Tribe, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, the Squaxin Island Tribe, and the Suquamish Tribe/Suquamish Foundation.

For more information, contact Project Lead Michael Kern (mkern@uw.edu, 206.601-4766; CUW Director Joel Baker (jebaker@uw.edu, 253.254.7025); CUW Board Chair/Project Advisor/Co-Executive Producer Jim Waldo (waldj@gth-law.com, 253.307.4376); Project Advisor/Co-Executive Producer David Troutt, Nisqually Tribe (troutt.david@nisqually-nsn.gov, 360.349.2390)