

Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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March 13, 2015

Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
NOAA Fisheries
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 2010

Attn: Brian Fredieu

**Re: Nomination of Joseph Y. Oatman to Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC)
Tribal Seat**

Dear Ms. Sobeck:

The Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) is proud to nominate Joseph Y. Oatman to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) as the designated Tribal representative.

The Nez Perce Tribe has federally recognized fishing rights and those rights have been adjudicated in the United States v. Oregon court. The Nez Perce Tribe has been a party to the United States v. Oregon litigation since the beginning of the case. The United States v. Oregon addresses treaty fishing rights of the Tribe and provides a forum for management of mainstem Columbia River treaty and non-treaty fisheries.

The Nez Perce Tribe has interests in ensuring salmon are protected in Snake River, Columbia River, Pacific Northwest and international forums involving regional fish resources. The Tribe is involved in fish restoration so that it may work to conserve, protect and rebuild runs to self-sustaining, harvestable levels.

The Tribe is very interested in the stewardship and management of marine fisheries that are under the jurisdiction of the PFMC. Both Snake River fall Chinook and coho are important stocks in PFMC area and terminal fisheries. The Nez Perce Tribe's Department of Fisheries Resources Management, with almost 200 employees, a \$20 million annual budget and a three state work area encompassed by the Tribe's ceded territory, is one of the largest tribal fisheries programs in the United States. The program has been instrumental in restoring Columbia basin salmonids wisely, and in so doing, protecting and enhancing rights to fish reserved by the Tribe in its treaties. The Department is recognized by federal and state fisheries co-managers as being instrumental to the efforts of restoring the resources of the Pacific Northwest.

Mr. Oatman has worked for the Tribe's Department of Fisheries Resource Management (DFRM) in various capacities since 1992. In that time, he has done field technician work, including surveying salmon fish populations and tagging fish; worked as a harvest biologist doing fishery harvest estimation and assisting the Nez Perce Tribe in managing its treaty salmon fisheries; and, has performed many managerial functions and duties in DFRM since hired as the Deputy Program Manager, a position that work in the administration of the Fisheries Program and its seven divisions that works to protect and rebuild anadromous and resident fish populations. Joseph handles a lot of the harvest and harvest-related issues for the Tribe, through his participation in the United States v. Oregon forum and process, as a standing member on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Regulatory Coordinating Committee (RCC), and his technical assistance to the Nez Perce policy member to the Policy Committee.

Mr. Oatman was also appointed to the Pacific Salmon Treaty Southern Panel in January of 2011 and re-appointed in October of 2014. The Panel consists of one representative of the United States, one appointee each from the governors of Washington and Oregon, two representatives of treaty Indian tribes, one appointee of the Secretary of State, and six representatives from Canada. The Southern Panel oversees U.S. ocean/river fisheries and certain southern Canadian fisheries. As a representative on the Southern Panel, it is his role and responsibility is to communicate the concerns and positions of the Southern U.S. tribes (four Columbia River Treaty Tribes and the 20 western Washington/Puget Sound treaty tribes) among this diverse group. The Nez Perce Tribe has a councilman who also serves as the Alternate Commissioner to the Pacific Salmon Commission, and Mr. Oatman interacts with him as necessary.

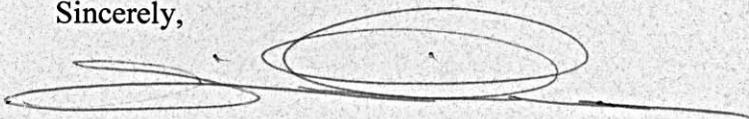
And more recently in 2014, he has been appointed to the Pacific Salmon Commission Southern Boundary Restoration and Enhancement Fund, the body that is responsible for providing a long-term and stable monetary base that supports efforts to conserve and enhance Pacific salmon populations in an effort to support healthy fisheries in Canada and the United States.

Mr. Oatman's knowledge of the relevant fisheries and the areas in which they occur will help him in the role of a PFMC member representing Tribal interests and priorities (please see his CV for additional details). These hands on experiences give him a very relevant background for serving on this council, given the relationship and connections between the harvest forums of the Pacific Salmon Treaty, United States v. Oregon, and harvest management and fish production actions that occur in the Snake Basin.

The Nez Perce Tribe is active in local, regional, national and international forums and processes that affect our fishery resources. We believe our nominee has the education and expertise to truly provide solid participation in the PFMC forum and process, and we are confident that he will be an effective member of the PFMC.

I thank you for this opportunity to submit this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Silas C. Whitman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Silas C. Whitman
Chairman