

- The most prestigious position in the Makah culture was as a Whale hunter.
- A Whale hunter was also a chief.
- To become a Whale hunter, a person had to acquire from a spirit power.
- Whale hunters required the most extensive ritual process for spirit acquisition.

The Past is our Heritage

- 1855 Treaty included the right to hunt whale.
- The last whale hunt was in 1921. The Makah decided to stop because the gray whale was becoming endangered from unmanaged hunting.
- In 1994 the gray whale was removed from the Endangered Species List.

- In 1995 the Makah announced its intention to resume traditional subsistence whaling practices.
- To re-establish whaling traditions (physically, spiritually, and emotionally challenge young people)
- To preserve the Makah's tribal identity as traditional Whaler's.
- To provide traditional foods.

- U.S. took the request to the International Whaling Commission in 1997.
- Makah received a quota of 20 gray whale over 5 years.
- May 17, 1999 Makah harpooned its first whale in over 70 years.
- They went whaling again in 2000, but was stopped by a federal appeals court ruling that they must seek a waiver from the marine Mammal Protection Act.

- On February 3, 2005 the Makah applied for a waiver.
- They also files a request to the Marine Mammal Protection act 8 days later.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service will draft an environmental impact statement on the proposal.
- The National Marine Fisheries Service can 1. Deny the request
- 2. Approve the request.
- 3. Amend the request with suggestions garnered from a series of scoping meetings.

- To hunt only during annual gray whale migration between Dec. 1 and May 31.
- To forgo hunting in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and avoid killing whales of the Pacific Coast Feeding Aggregation.

What is in the request?

- The treaty along gives it the right to hunt whale.
- Whale hunting was a keystone to Makah culture (1,500)
- Whaling has become a symbol of Makah sovereignty, treaty rights and cultural renaissance.
- Whaling was once a staple of the seagoing tribe's diet.

What is the supporting argument for the request?

- After the scoping meetings, the fisheries service will take about a year to draft an Environmental Impact Statement.
- It will then be submitted for public comment.
- If the agency favors the waiver, it next will send its final statement to a federal administrative law judge.
- The judge will review it and perhaps call for further hearings before setting rules and regulations.
- This process could run past the 2007 expiration of the Makah's quota from the International Whaling Commission.

What happens next?

- If that happens, then the Makah's must ask the U.S. to petition the Commission for a new quota.