

Native Perspectives on Sustainability: Shawn Yanity (Stillaguamish)

Interviewee: Shawn Yanity

Interviewer: David E. Hall

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DH (00:13): As you know from our other conversations, this project is about sustainability from the perspective of indigenous leaders, and our aim today is to hear from you on the subject. So to start, if you could tell us a little bit about yourself, in terms of your heritage and where is home for you, your background.

SY (00:34): Okay. I was born in Tacoma, Washington in 1965. My mother and grandmother basically grew up away from our culture so I knew nothing of our culture or about our tribe and in fact we weren't a recognized tribe until 1976. The federal government pulled our recognition just after the treaty was signed. Our members living on reservation left the reservation because living conditions were poor and refused to return to the reservation, so they pulled our recognition. So, I knew nothing of the fact of my native heritage other than the fact that my ancestors were Stillaguamish Indians. And in '75 we moved back to Tacoma and started hearing more about what the tribe was doing; trying to get its recognition. What helped was getting recognized in the Judge Boldt Decision that the tribe had fishing rights, though we weren't recognized. As time went on I knew there was something inside that was telling me that there was another part of me other than my German and French and Irish background. So, I got into fisheries in 1980; I was working for the Dept. of Fisheries in the state of Washington. By then we had a hatchery up here that was operating and spirit was leading me saying "connect to your ancestral heritage." In 1994 I started thinking about moving up here and so I did in 1995 I moved up here and got a house on, on our reservation and started getting involved with the tribe; trying to learn our culture, who we are, where I came from, our history. And decided to run for council and when I got on council that's when everything just went from there. I really started getting involved with promoting our heritage and researching history about the tribe. Our tribe is one of the least known about tribes that is recorded in history so that makes it pretty difficult for a lot of us that grew up away from the culture. My great-grandfather was half-Stillaguamish, and he raised his kids like they were non-native; he raised them to believe they were white kids. There were several reasons for that one being for the kids about to grow with the ridicule of being part white and part Indian. So, the only culture that had linked me to anything close to our native heritage was in Alaska. We lived in Eskimo territory, and so our neighbors spoke their language very fluently, very well aware of their culture. There was a lot of similarities that they had, in their culture, in their teachings that the Puget Sound tribes have. That's working with the elders and the kids go out to gather and help. There were a lot of work and art work and stuff, so that gave me I believe a good stepping stone into understanding a lot of our history here in the Puget Sound and our relatives amongst the tribes. So, lately I've been really linking myself with our culture, trying to learn our language, sharing it with our children, trying to promote some of our elders getting involved with gathering and cedar bark, basket weaving, stuff like that. Because of

my time schedule I haven't been able to get out there and do it with them, but when I find that avenue where a land owner has Cedar trees or something I say, "Hey can I come out and gather some Cedar bark?" and then I give that information to our cultural community and try to promote it that way, and try to get these guys the resources and access that they need. And that is about where we are sitting at now. Clinics that we have that's been a big part of what I've been doing lately and become part of my background is social services; drug treatment, dental care, medical care for our tribal membership. We try to figure out how we can provide quality services to our membership and at the same time servicing the surrounding community. With the issue of having a small tribe problem that you face is a lot of our membership aren't married inter-tribally and, so there's too much close relation. Having non-natives entering into our family group we've got to expand our service to reach out beyond our tribal membership. So we pretty much open our door to anyone who wants to come in and receive services has the opportunity to come in and do that. By doing that it is increasing our service pool. It strengthens and increases our capabilities to provide real good quality services to our membership. One of the dynamics to that is since we're not on a large reservation and because of having that problem, we scattered across and were living inside the community of Arlington, and Snohomish County, and where ever else, and here in Washington, and we've got members out of state, and by reaching out to the community what happens on reservation has an influence off reservation and vice-versa. So we decided to really attack social services aggressively on promoting these programs. Because we have a tribal member that is going to a public school, well, we want to make sure that there's programs out there in Arlington and Snohomish County that are servicing the community get our support. Because we can actually show connections in certain circumstances where our tribal members and our kids are bring influenced by something off reservation. So we have really learned to diversify our programs.

DH: (8:10) Later I am going to ask you questions about your community and you've already made reference to your community on a couple different levels and I am wondering how you would define your community in terms of people and places.

SY: (8:26) Right now because of the decision we had to go on entering into the gaming realm. What really created an impact to our community, because the only piece of property we had to game on unfortunately was where our housing was. So we were the first tribe in the nation to turn around and make the decision that we're going to get into gaming and remove our community. And what we did is we replaced the homes, with the people that lived on the reservation; we had our members, we had Tulalip, Upper Skagit, Sauk-Suiattle, and members living on our reservation. So what we did is we let them pick out a home that they wanted to live on and the tribe purchased the homes inside Arlington. So, we are still *here*, it's just that they're scattered, they're not on one large community. One of the things we've really been working hard on is bringing everybody back, and in order to do that, that's looking at the infrastructure costs, which is pretty high. We have a chunk of property that is 80 acres and is the perfect spot and we've got in trust waiting to put our village back together; get a community center, a long house, a elder's center. So now it's just a matter of recouping that cost so that we can do that and get that structure back together. So right now our community is doing the best we can to keep our elders in contact with everybody, and our kids programs running and operating the best we can on to service them as well. So that is one of the goals down the road here and we're hoping that within five years that we'll have that piece of property built up. But in the meantime,

as properties are purchased by the tribe near the casino where the housing was, we're putting members back into those homes. So piece-by-piece we're bringing them back together. But that is one of the things that really kind of set us back on that tight knit community again by doing that. Though our tribal membership at the time was really concerned about it, I believe they have done a really good job of not letting that destroy the focus and everybody hanging together, and were still doing things with the kids, we get together to sell fireworks, and our programs are seeing more of our tribal members access things. We are kind of limping along on that, but once we get our goal met and we can get a community center back together I don't think we'll miss that beat. I think everything will fall into place to where it was.

DH: (11:53) Okay, so you see that definition for yourself of your community kind of in a state of transition?

SY: (12:00) Yeah

DH: (12:02) Well again we'll come back to those questions about your community in a later segment. So, the term "sustainability" is being used by a lot of people now who are seeking to address the economic, social, environmental challenges of today. And first I am wondering if sustainability is a term that you use or if there is other language that you prefer to use?

SY: (12:27) We've used "sustainability," we've also used: "the tribe needs to *diversify*." We're in a unique situation here compared to the other tribes, being a small tribe, and small parcels of land, and that they're scattered. The small tribes such as Sauk-Suiattle, they are a little bigger than we are, they are up in the mountains and they've got just a small amount of land. They're almost the same picture that we are other than the fact that county growth is catching up with us. And we're kind of under the clock to either move and regain some of our land back so that when we have an opportunity to grow as a government and grow as a tribe, or let it, you know county growth, go by and all these housing developments and other developments go up that will end up choking the tribe. And it's happening fast; 20 years ago, there in Smokey Point, that was farm land. And now you look at it and there's Costco, Target, and restaurants, Safeway and a thrifty store was there, little mini malls, and it's just going up quick, Lowe's is in there, and now there's Harley Davidson store. The development is coming, and for our tribe we can't diversify our government and take the opportunity to look at other avenues to grow economically and culturally if it develops and the growth happens without the tribe growing. So one of the things we have been doing is purchasing land and some believe that the tribe is doing it very aggressively and in a sense I guess we are doing it aggressively; we are trying to beat the developers. I've seen what the plans are for up on top of the hill over here just one exit up where the casinos at; there's a lot of large tracks of land in there and the developers have their eyes on it. There's housing developments that are going up like you wouldn't believe, and there are large tracks of many homes on one acre, quarter acre properties. And so there's many concerns with that, not only that the tribe gets choked into not being able to grow, but what are the impacts of that to our aquifers here? We face low flows each year in the Stillaguamish River, water temperatures are really high, thousands of landslides that we've got to face, that creates problems with our Chinook runs and our Coho runs, and not having the water there to support the growth is a big concern for us. So that's one of the things that the tribe looks at as we purchase these lands; we can stop some of the development that would happen. We don't want to stop

development completely because we don't want to get into that frame of mind that, "you can't move here, move somewhere else." You know population is growing, so as that population grows one of the things the tribes face is working with the local governments on population management and growth management. It isn't to just try to stop growth, it's how you manage it and you've got to make sure that whether its development or commercial or whether its farm land, that it's done responsibly. Unfortunately, the perception out there when the tribe tries to grow, we go through a whole process, a lot of the public doesn't support it. They think it's irresponsible, you know, we're taking away taxes from the county, we are changing the zoning on the property. So that's become a difficult process for us to be able to look at ways to look at how to keep the tribe growing. Our vision of diversifying and sustainability doesn't match with some of the public's view out there, or even the county's. The state and the city of Arlington, they understand a lot of the vision that the tribe has: we've got to grab properties and connect them to other trust properties, so that we can be self-governing. You can't do that very easily when the properties are scattered, they're hard to police, you can't come up with land management when you've got 5 acres here, an acre here, and ten acres over here; its kind of hard to put together land management plans and zoning. So, those are issues that we face as well.

DH (18:11) Can you say a little bit more about how these ideas of diversifying and growth relate to the concept of sustainability, as you think of it?

SY (18:44) One thing with the growth, well let's just take the tribe's growth; the need to connect our land so that we have a large land base. It's a lot easier for us as a government to put together that zoning like the city does; this area is industrial, this area is commercial, light commercial, residential, municipality functions, you know, the governmental functions and law enforcement. We need to have that. With law enforcement, having to patrol the scattered parcels: now you've got impacts on Snohomish County, and Arlington City law enforcement.. You've got two other jurisdictions that are wondering where are these trust properties, and how are we going to provide law enforcement. So there are a lot of tracks that they have to keep track of. So if we consolidated, put all our land in one area, that helps us with our law enforcement being able to respond and properly enforce tribal law on these properties and it helps the county and the city understand where those jurisdictional limits are. With our own transit system, that's one other thing that we have going is the Stillaguamish Tribal Transit System that provides transportation for special needs clients. We get them to their appointments for our clinics, or the doctor, or whatever their needs are. We get them up and moving for the northern part of Snohomish County. By having that transit system already in place and then having a consolidated chunk of land, if we had all of our services located in one area, then the service that we provides a lot more efficient, especially for our tribal member that will live in that area. You know our cultural programs are located in there; that's one thing that we've seen that when you have a tribal membership that's scattered they tend to lose out on services. So, for us, in order to function properly we need to have that large track of land so that we can do that. A lot of residents feel that up here when we're buying up a lot of land (they) feel that as a threat, because tribal governments don't receive the opportunity to create levies and tax structure on business on tribal lands. If it's a non-native business that tax goes back to the county and the state. We don't get to collect that tax so you know that's where we also have to diversify; buy land lease it out. That's our form of some sense of a taxation, and that kind of creates an unstable perception too in the public, where you know the tribe is changing zoning to meet the needs of a company to

help that company operate. Not only just business but the education for our kids having a close centralized area that these kids can gather. There's wetlands that we can enhance up in this area that we're focusing. There are a lot of educational tools on the properties that we can use to reach out to our kids. Part of that is our culture; we've got some elders that have been learning how to gather and stuff like that. An educational outreach program for our kids and our tribal membership to learn about our culture. So, in a sense we're no different; what I am trying to get at is that we're no different than any other governmental structure. Whether it's a city or a county you want to have a centralized area in order to be more efficient in your self-governance: for your social services programs, education, governmental fire protection, law enforcement and so on. So that's a need that we have for us that's the infrastructure that we need to start, so that we can keep going with being self contained and reach sustainability and keep that going.

DH (24:37) What else comes to mind when you think of the term sustainability?

SY (24:41) Our culture. Like I stated earlier, a lot of us grew up away from our culture. Not getting our recognition back until 1976 a lot of us have pretty much grew up away from here. We do have a few of tribal members that have lived here their entire life, so they are pretty familiar with it and they grew up around it and they know the family connections. But for a lot of the families that had moved to Utah, Montana, Idaho, Alaska, Oregon, Arizona, you know, we lost a lot of that, and some of them didn't move because it was a choice to get away from here, it was a choice of an opportunity for them: they married and they moved the family for job opportunities or whatever it was, so we grew up away from it (the culture). And for a tribe it's kind of hard to educate a lot of our tribal membership, and not having that cultural background, the importance of being a tribal member, the importance of supporting the tribe and helping this tribe grow. For a lot to them to grow up and say, "why do we need to fish, why do we need to hunt, what's the importance of knowing the language, learning the arts, basketry, the importance of gathering? That's not a need I have right now." By doing the research that we do and by pulling the staff together and the people that are interested to try to reach out and link back to our culture, what a lot folks have come to realize is that's part of their identity; they start understanding more the importance, why this tribe needs to keep going. There is a huge history here that connects them back to their heritage so they start learning and getting more interested, and start realizing that there's a past and responsibility that we have to our ancestors to keep their teachings going. For me it was all of those things but also finding out inside who I am, that there was always something inside that kept pushing me to find out, there's more to me than just this enrollment card that says I'm Stillaguamish. It starts bringing people together, and getting them to understand the importance of the tribe as a family. The gatherings that we start having and people getting together you start connecting with the families and realizing who the distant relatives are, and every time that someone does pick up on something that's information, that's history saved; if they've got the information try to get them to share it. The more people we get in the more people we've got wanting to be part of discovering more about us. So the culture, the cultural aspect of it too it is the connections we have with other tribes; the relatives and relations that we have with just about everyone of the Puget Sound tribes in some sense we can show a link to those tribes, especially our really close tribes, Suquamish (<http://www.suquamish.nsn.us/>), Upper Skagit, Sauk-Suiattle (<http://www.sauk-suiattle.com/>), Snoqualmie, Tulalip. We have a lot of links to those tribes. So finding out more details, like our language--the Stillaguamish had their own language, although it was a Northern Lushootseed

language, we had our own emphasis on words, we had our own words for things, and the way we spoke was specific to Stillaguamish. But at the same time you see the influence that the Snohomish tribes had on us, the Upper Skagit and depending on the north fork or the south fork you heard different dialects of our language because of the connections from other tribes. Having that and looking at the relations from the other tribes, then you start looking at differences in some of the other cultural practices that each tribe has, each family, and even each family structure there's differences in a lot of the way things were done. Medicines, certain families were the ones that had certain remedies for medicines that other families didn't have, and what plants you gather for it and knowledge on certain things. So by making those connections you're bringing these gifts back home that the creator had given us. The things that were sustainability back before the settlers came, everything was here. The whole idea then was that you honor the gifts that were given to you, you passed things down. With the settlers coming in, and the dilution of our culture, that really took a lot of that away. A lot of that was by choice by tribal members wanting to walk away from it, and there was a lot of it that was forced, you know through boarding schools; not allowed to speak the language, can't do this kind of cultural practice, your art work, your basket weaving, your gathering. So, reaching out and getting that and people understanding it I think really enriches the tribe, and definitely puts that meaning back into what a tribe is; we're a family, a rich cultural identity out there that had a huge impact on how the natural resources and the gifts that the creator gave us, how we managed it.

DH (32:02) So, is it fair to say that some of the things that you were discussing earlier in terms of growth and diversification, and connecting the land base, and establishing a central location is towards that end of strengthening the cultural identity and building the culture back up?

SY (32:18) Yeah. Yeah, it's a lot easier to reach out to our membership when they are really close. Having a place that we call our lands, our home opportunities for putting up a cultural center. That's part of it; we've to get our membership to have ownership in their culture and in this tribe. Being spread out it's almost like you have that-you do, you have a separation. So bringing everybody together you'll have that sense of ownership of "this is ours, a definite chunk of land that's ours and we're free to put together a cultural center and our smoke house and we can communicate a lot better." Back when the housing development was up that was one of things that you know we didn't use to have to contact everybody by mail or by phone to say, "Hey we're doing this here." It was we were reaching out to the houses the houses were right there, and the tribal community that is that close together, then there are more gatherings at homes too. There was a couple homes on weekend that were having pow-wows on weekends at their place, or they would have some of their own ceremonies, mini ceremonies there at their place. You can't do that when you're living in a housing development that is surrounded by non-natives. One, they don't understand. So, we've heard already from a few folks: here they're living in the middle of Arlington and you're stacked house to house to house and you're in your back yard and their doing native ceremonies or other ceremonies. They're in full regalia, and all that comes with the wailing, the songs and stuff. It's not accepted by a lot of non-native communities, you know the people that don't understand it. A lot of it is secret too. A lot them don't want to share this, it's not a public thing, this is a private thing. So, having our, and I hate to say it, but having our own little boundaries where we can hide and be who we are without interference, that's very important. It doesn't make them want to try to find another location to

do it, they do it on our area, in our place, to where they can practice and perform and do the things they need to do in order get these order to get the naming ceremonies done, birthing ceremonies, funerals, some of the winter ceremonies are very private. For the longest time, we've been and we still are, the tribal members that practice those are using long houses up in Upper Skagit, and I believe up at Sauk, and also Tulalip, they are part of their smoke houses. That's something that by doing this we'd be able to create the opportunity for our tribal membership, that are that deep in that rich into the culture have that opportunity to have their smokehouse ceremonies on *our* home land and here in our territory. They'll have ownership in it, and they can do that without any kind of interference even with the rest of the tribal membership. It is important to have the centralizing of our culture and our own territory.

DH (37:17) You mentioned a couple of things I want to ask about including the connections with the surrounding tribes and how that's important for the sustainability of your culture. Can you say anything else about that; the strengthening of the relationship with those neighboring tribes?

SY (37:34) Sure. One, because a lot of them are our relatives and so by making that connection we're connecting with our family, which is important. A lot of other tribes out here, in Puget Sound, by making those connections and reaching out to their leadership-some of the things that our tribe doesn't have right now; we don't have shell fish rights, we don't have that many people fishing anymore. So by reaching out and making those connections with the other tribes when we have ceremonial needs were able to reach out and make requests for: we need Clams, we need Crab, Halibut, Salmon. So, we do a lot of trading with them or family members from other tribes will say, "Hey, no, I'll do this because your family and this is a need we will take care of the family." Like I said before, working these dynamics and reaching out to the other tribes also opens up the door for the culture to come back, because there is a lot of history out there that they have of the Stillaguamish or people that knew of the Stillaguamish, or were related, and the culture that was there that we had lost. By making those connections and seeing that its coming from our heart, it's true that we want to learn these things and were serious about it, they're more open to share a lot of the knowledge they have, a lot of their history. We have elders from upper Skagit, Sauk and Tulalip who've been working with us to go out, and they are teaching us how to harvest cat tails, and the cedar bark, the cedar bark roots, medicinal plants. So there's a lot of knowledge out there that we are regaining for that. And it's stuff that they just don't give away, because if they see if your into it for a hobby, they see that and this isn't a hobby. This is going back to not letting that culture die out and educating our kids enforces who they are and why the culture is so important. Soon as they see that we're serious about it, and we are wanting to learn, and learn the ceremonies, and how these gifts are being used. They're right there sharing these gifts with us. When the tribe gets into a situation-for example, here on highway 530, the department of transportation on a project unearthed some ancestral remains and one of our old graveyards. If we didn't have those connections within the tribes; sharing where we're at, why we're trying to grow, the family connections, the government to government relationships with the local tribes, we wouldn't have gotten the help from them to re-bury our ancestors the proper way. We could have done what we knew of and re-buried our ancestors, but we would have done that wrong. So, we sat with a lot of the tribal leadership and the cultural leaders and elders from several tribes, all the way up to Lummi to the Muckleshoot. They came together with us and helped us learn how things are supposed to be done, and to honor our ancestors and get them laid back to rest as proper as possible. For a lot of our folks that were involved with that, I

myself, I mean that was baptism by fire, and very intense, and more relationships built from that. You start getting involved with stuff like that really hit home with a lot of our elders and some of the kids that were involved to a certain extent, seeing what was going on and kids helping out with the going out looking for certain places we needed to gather for certain things that we needed for certain giveaways. It really opened a lot of our eyes seeing the reality of what this tribe has lost and where we're sitting. You've got modernization coming, mowing us right over, and because of what had happened in the past and how we got scattered really triggered with a lot of our kids an interest on our culture. Having 8 and 9 year old kids picking up on the language-and then watching myself and other adults struggling with it-but they feel inside when they speak the language. We're out there gathering, learning the language at the same time, talking with elders, hearing their stories...it's very spiritual and soul searching even--you find a lot out about yourself. It's something that you can't identify in a non-native surrounding. You can't be in a mall, or out here in Smoky Point in the middle of Lowe's and Costco. It's just not the same you know. Having our own boundaries and our own territory that we can actually call "home." Regardless of whether we own it or not this is our home don't get me wrong but it's hard to have ownership on something when you see what the land use is, and the land practices that are going on. Almost weekly there are discoveries of our cultural artifacts, and the impacts there. Knowing that our graveyards and other very sensitive cultural sites are sitting on private property, and the tribe has very limited capabilities of protecting that. There's another aspect of sustainability, where we have a responsibility to protect those, but that responsibility is limited; we've got to go to the non-native courts to fight it or the non-native permit process. The nice thing about some of the land we're trying to consolidate has significant cultural value to the tribe: village sites, graveyards. There's some archaeological sites on there that date back 13,000 years. The archaeologists have gone and done work on it and said, "This is one of the oldest sights in Puget Sound." And we've seen the county desecrate those sights on road projects. Unintentionally the county government did it; their work crews instead of going through the process of making sure everything was okay-it was a maintenance project so their maintenance projects don't go through the same review process and cultural reviews. And what their supervisors interpretation of a maintenance was compared to what it actually was--the movement of the amount of soils they did, it wasn't a maintenance project. So, when you have those kinds of impacts where they are removing soils and putting soils back on a grave yard. Those are the kinds of things, we own that property we can always protect it, we know that if you have to do work on that property that there's ceremonies we got to do. If we don't know what the ceremony is, then we've got a lot of folks who know before you do anything we've got spiritual work we got to do. That's where the connection with the other tribes are: we go to them, they're the experts, they're the ones who have been doing it a *long* time, they're the ones who their ancestors handed it down to the grandparents, to the parents, and then their parents handed it down to them. They're the ones that know how to conduct these spiritual ceremonies to bless the land, or if we end up in an area where we're worried about disturbing the ancestors, or a village site, and we don't know what to do. We don't want to put ourselves in a bad situation and accidentally neglect or do wrong to our culture, or our ancestors, and that's spirituality to our people. So, if we don't have that connection with the other tribes, they're not going to help us on that. The last thing we want to do is have our relatives out there looking at us as a tribe that doesn't take it serious, or "look at them they *think* they know what they are doing." Showing the family connections with the other tribes, an issue that comes with that is some of our cemeteries have relatives from the other tribes. That is one thing that we looked at with highway 530, is that

was a gathering area, that is where our relatives from Tulalip, Sauk-Suiattle would come down to the fork along with the Upper Skagit, Snohomish, Swinomish, Suquamish. That was our gathering area, where they would come there, gather, go either at the North Fork, South Fork. So, learning more of the history there, it's not just Stillaguamish that's buried there but relations to the other tribes close by. We've had folks say here's your evidence, we've got relatives that were buried because they were married into the Stillaguamish. So, when we got into that I had to learn what was culturally appropriate on addressing our ancestors. You have some folks that say, "No these are Stillaguamish, these are ours." But then you look at the dynamic structure of the Puget Sound tribes and the family connections and we had to say, "We need to help" these are *our* ancestors, all of ours, these are our relations. By breaking that boundary, people started realizing that "Stillaguamish is there, they're starting to get to there. They're starting to realize the importance of this here, and the structure of our culture," and the door opened. Our relatives from, like I say, all over the place were coming in and sharing things and helping us on preparing gifts for the giveaway and ceremony that was about to happen. If you don't have that connection there, we're not going to be able to keep that culture here and sustain--then it becomes assumptions about how things were done and we just try to guess and start doing some research and get the non-native perception of what our culture was.

DH (51:43) So then the other thing that I wanted to asked about which some of which you just talked about may relate to is, you brought up earlier, land management and natural resource management can you talk more about how that's important to sustainability?

SY (52:01) Sure. Having the large tracks of land--like go back to the zoning: even though some of the public has the perception that right now once the tribe, Stillaguamish, decides to buy land we're going to change the zoning. Regardless of what the zoning is right now, once it gets into Trust the tribe has jurisdiction to change the zoning and without regards to the habitat, or with our regards to the environment, which isn't true. There's a lot of land that we purchased that floods. There's land that's wetland that we purchase. We feel that by buying up a lot of this land, one, it connects us. We need that parcel to connect with the other parcel. Then all the development that we've done, we've been able to put the restrictions on our self that we would ask the county or the city to do. One of the properties that we bought was a 104 acre tract of land, and its pasture, Pilchuck Creek runs through it. One of the things we would like to see on some of these properties and areas is a larger buffer on the river. Ideally, we would like to see a 200ft buffer on certain areas, not on every stretch of the river but on certain areas. You know, there are certain critical areas where we would like to see a larger buffer. Does that mesh with what a farmer needs? Or somebody that is trying to build their home on a piece property that only has 200 ft piece of property off the river? It doesn't work. So when the tribe has an opportunity to look at property that we have, we can apply what we feel is appropriate, and we've done that. So we've put a large buffer on Pilchuck Creek there on that property. We have opportunities so once they're in our hand, our natural resource department determines if it's a critical area, but say the crick is choked off by grasses, or an undesirable brush, or the marsh just isn't functioning right, we have an opportunity to go in without having to go through the county to force the county to look into repairing it. Or a home owner or land owner, developer, and create that tension because they don't want to spend that kind of money. They're a business, you know a developer wants to develop land put the houses in and be gone. We are able to do that, so that is one of the things that we do when we purchase land is our natural resource staff will

look at it and go, “you know we have a responsibility to this resource and it goes back to our ancestors, they were care takers.” So land use in these areas where there is rehabilitation or enhancement, those are some of the things that we do. We’ve got a piece of land right now that we’re looking at purchasing where there’s a large wetland in it. But the way the wetland has sat for many years, and the property not being used, the wetlands kind of spread out. Because of that now it’s impacting the neighbors, because the old channels where the stream was are getting choked off. We own the property and it goes into Trust we don’t need to go through that permit process. We have our own internal review; we can exercise our authority that we feel is our responsibility to manage the wetlands, the habitat, not only for fish, but the deer, the elk, the eagle, the other birds, amphibians and so on and so on. A lot of the wetlands in certain areas, that’s where a lot of our medicine plants and cat tails and certain things that we need that sustains our culture. Things that we gather are in those areas so we can’t just ignore letting those go.

DH (57:51) If you had to define sustainability in a concise statement or two, how would you define it?

SY (58:05) I guess I would define it as...it’s got to start back at our culture. I mean, that’s the foundation for our sustainability is our culture, our identity, who we are. You don’t have that, you don’t have people that have ownership in who the tribe is. Then from there you go to the next level that is needed, and that’s for the tribe to operate as a government. We can’t sit back and let progress pass us up, so we’ve got to keep up with the times. We’ve got to get into business, we’ve got to get into development, we’ve got to get into more advanced services for drug treatment and health of our membership and our community. So starting with our culture and getting that foundation I think supports the unity of the tribe. If you don’t have your tribal membership feeling as a whole, or trying to bring them together you lose that. Even as hard as you try to do that, what I’ve seen out there in Indian country is you still have the tribal membership-now the modernization of the politics plays in they don’t believe the tribal government is doing that well. So you’ve got your governmental issues out there. Even the tribal government needs to have some kind of sustainability. You want to have continuity in your tribal government so that way the work that they do, they can keep going. There we are no different than county government, city government, and the federal government. You want to have continuity in that government so that way we can meet the needs of our tribal membership and help support our culture, support our elders, and our housing. There is a lot of needs that we have there. From tribal government to tribal membership you might have a different vision of what sustainability is. That’s where it will play out in the tribal elections. They may believe the tribe is going somewhere that they feel the tribe shouldn’t be going. Again, that’s where education with our tribal membership is important. I don’t think I’ve touched much on that...because if they have a better understanding of where our culture is and what’s the importance of that there. And then all the issues that affect Indian country, that could probably help educate them to come up and be new leaders. Maybe the tribal leadership is missing something, they’re going in the right direction but they’re just not making the right connections, whether it’s with the Federal Government or with the other tribes, and not helping the tribe grow. By educating our kids to grow up, or even folks my age, get them the education to understand the whole structure of tribal government and the effects on it. There is always some out there that relates to things better than I can or better than some of our other council members can, that pick up on it quicker. So the tribal government, teaching everyone to be leaders, that’s important to

the sustainability of the tribe as well.

--tech chatter--

DH: We'll take a break here as we need to change tapes. There's a question that while he's changing the tapes we can have you think about. This is the image piece: as you've been talking is there any image or symbol that's come to mind that captures or represents some aspect of the concept of sustainability to you?

SY (1:04:52) I went to council and talked to them about doing our own Pendleton Blanket, because you know we give blankets and stuff that we've picked out. These that are kind of more of a Midwest tribal design, southwest tribal design and its become you know part of the culture up here. Even pow-wows; pow-wow's weren't a practice that Puget Sound tribes practiced. Ours were potlatches. Totally different. We didn't have grass dancers and fancy dress. So that's a Midwest culture. There's drumming and singing but different kinds of drums, different kinds of singing and regalia and different ceremonies. A potlatch, when you hold one you prep all year for a potlatch. You make canoes you make things you gather stuff and when you have your potlatch you give it all away.... Can you imagine your parents--look at it back in those days: everybody gathers things and trades things and puts stuff together for the giveaway. They give away canoes. That was their transportation. You make canoes and you give them away. Chief Jimmy Dorsey, his dad, Que-Que Kanam, was very well known through Puget Sound as one of the richest and most wealthy person for giveaways. He'd have 12 canoes made up sometimes and he'd give 'em away. So I tell the kids, can you imagine going out and taking your bicycle--if you did it modern style: your mom and dad getting cars and giving cars away. That's your transportation and that's basically what it was like back in them days. To give away a boat, that's modern transportation back then. So I try to put that out to the kids and get them to realize what the impacts were back then to tribes compared to nowadays. The difference in the economy, now you're buying things at the store, so it's a little bit easier, but you're still working your butt till you're tired, trying to get these things that we purchase. Back then you did the same work but you were making your product. So can you imagine your dad buying a vehicle and working for seven years to pay it off, or whatever his loan is, and turn around and give it away so he doesn't have it. No way! (laughter)

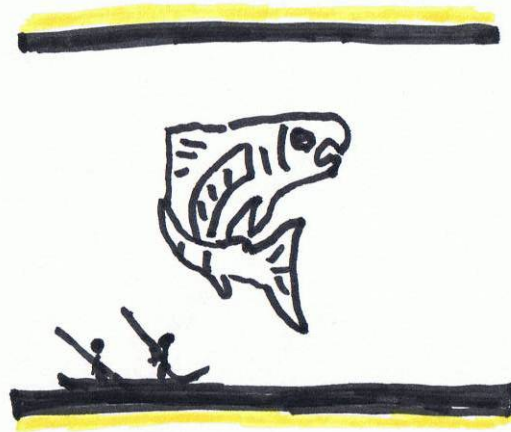
DH (1:08:18) That's a big thing to ask of somebody now. I can imagine it coming to form if there was a sense that there were a lot of other people out there doing the same thing.

SY (1:08:36) Right, why am I the only one! (laughter). So, anyway, I went to council and I said you know we keep giving away blankets but there is nothing that is linked to us. So what I came up with, I asked if I could come up with a design that they would approve. What I came up with is very simple. It's a red blanket and then...what the design is, is our fish logo, and then a black stripe that goes across here, and a black stripe that goes across here. On this black stripe there is a yellow stripe on top of it. Then on the bottom of the black stripe is a yellow stripe, and on this stripe it's got a shovel-nosed canoe with two members in it holding a bird. The black line represents the river, the fisherman right now represents the tribe as a whole, the river symbolizes our identity and the yellow stripe on this side is the sunset, our past generations. The other one is the sunrise or future generations and then that's why the canoe is on the bottom sitting in the

river of our future generation, is connecting that back to our past. So I think that's what I would use.

--break--

DH (0:05) So, you've drawn an image for us that represents some aspect of your thinking on sustainability, can you describe the image for us?



SY (0:10) Sure. First the center image is our insignia or logo that is used to identify the tribe, which is a Salmon, King Salmon. And then the two black lines represent our river, the Stillaguamish River. The yellow lines represent sunrise and sunset. So here this would be sunset representing our past lives, our ancestry on the river, and then here the sunrise the future generations. There are two tribal members in a shovel nose canoe, poling up river. So here's where we have the connection from our ancestral, cultural connection to who we are, and our ancestors, and our past lives with our future generations.

--tape switch--

DH (0:06) Earlier you identified your community in terms of the Stillaguamish tribal membership and land base. Now I would like you to allow your imagination to take you into the future and imagine the future in an ideal sense for your community where this concept of sustainability has truly taken form. Allow yourself to be there in the future as an observer of this future place and simply report back to us in terms of what you see in your vision for a sustainable future for your community. Whenever you're ready, share with us what you see.

SY (0:47) I would see a lot of land back to the tribe. At least 10,000 acres back to the tribe. Most of that, if the tribe's vision is reached, most of that land would be covered by natural resources. Habitat protection along our spawning grounds for Chinook, and sensitive areas: eagle and elk habitat, deer habitat. The rest of it would be back for the use of the tribe operating on a day to day basis, where we have a large village; a housing area where homes are available for tribal membership. We have a more rich health system; healthcare is a very needed, and very lacked funded part of Indian country. Having services available there, having counselors that are able to go to the home for some patients that can't leave the home. So we would be able to provide services at home as well as at clinics. Have an area set aside for our cultural practices; get our smoke house built. Areas where we can have tribal members smoke fish, prepare goods that they

can operate a business on smoked meats or smoked salmon. So that be kind of like part of a cultural center also, where we are able to sell products like a trading post kind of style, cultural center.. Have a self-sustained governmental structure where our needs are met. We have a gas station, we have a grocery store, something that is self contained for our membership. Having a couple more people on council, broaden our ideals, expanding our council. Having our language a lot more fluently spoken from our elders and our kids. Having an educational center that would deal strictly with cultural issues, so that way we have a really good focus on the cultural issues, so that we could strengthen our identity and preserve our history. I also see a museum so that way we could recover and protect artifacts out there in museums, or yet to be discovered. At the same time use it as an educational outreach to educate the non--native community about the Stillaguamish people, who we are, where we came from, and what we are about. Opportunities to create economic development that will support the tribal government and meet the needs of the governmental structure so that we can continue to provide services to our tribal members, job opportunities, education, stuff like that. Another important goal of that is more higher education to our tribal members. Seeing more people take advantage and have the opportunity for higher education just to better their lives. As well as not having the need for drug addiction facilities. By linking onto the culture...for folks that link onto the culture, they find the spirituality of our ancestors and our culture, and hopefully that will lead them, the ones that are struggling with drug addiction and alcoholism, get them off that so that way those impacts aren't happening on the children or onto the family. That's a piece that I would definitely like to see in the future of where those impacts that are happening now and have happened are just a minor thing, if not gone completely. Because we're having to have children removed from homes and placed in foster care or being adopted out. I don't want to see families ripped apart anymore. I don't know if you call that a realistic or non-realistic vision but for the sustainability of our people as Indian people in general, we can't have these kinds of poisons tearing our families apart. And so for our future that is something we hope we don't see. We see unity in family. We see the unity in the community where our membership is coming home, coming back to our lands, and I guess the family support to fight these kinds of things. I'd like to see the natural resource part of our salmon coming back home. Get our salmon off the endangered species list. The salmon, the trout, the elk, the deer, that's part of our culture, and to have those disappear is another piece of our culture that is being taken away. We're responsible for those gifts that the creator had given us. That's why we take natural resources so seriously and why it's so important to get so much land back into natural resources to help promote the quality of life for these gifts, and the salmon, and the elk, and the deer, and the work that we do. By allowing those cultural riches have sustainability, not only does the tribe have benefits from that, but look what Arlington, Snohomish County, Skagit County, the state of Washington benefit from that. We've got fishermen and hunters that are non-native that are out here utilizing the same resources. I'd like to see the vision on that, the work that we do, is shared amongst everybody, everybody gets to benefit from that.

DH (10:06) Can you say more about the kinds of relationships that you see within your community? You mentioned family...

SY (10:17) Yeah, I see, are you talking about now or what I would like to see?

DH (10:21) What you would like to see?

SY (10:23) What would I like to see? I'd like to see the families gather more as families. There is a lot of separation of family now. There is, even amongst our own tribe, there is discrimination, you know a light skinned Indian and a dark skinned Indian. I'd like that to be healed. Recognize that who you are is from inside the heart. We all take in the importance of who we are, and we are here trying to learn more, and that means something to us. I would like to see that removed so that way there is a healing amongst our families. Tribal families are no different than any other family: you have your family structure, your family fights (laughter). A family is a family (laughter). I'd like to see the families a lot tighter knit group, more of a supporting active part of each other. I think by having cultural centers put in, and everybody getting into our culture and bringing us back together, that is a step to doing it. I'd like to see our community, once we start healing, I would like to see our community reaching out to the local communities. Take what knowledge we have, and expertise that we have, and all these people that we hire in, or the expertise that our own tribal membership have, or our government has, and be an effective part outside the tribal community. The Stillaguamish tribe, we were very open-armed to a lot of settlers. When the settlers started coming in we were pretty receptive, and in fact we taught a lot of them the life here, and where you get things. That's something that I would like to continue. I would like to see it continue that we're extending our kinship off reservation and sharing that with the community.

DH (13:33) Can you say more about that relationship beyond your community and extending your kinship? What do you see in terms of the quality of that relationship, the nature of that...

SY (13:43) I see the relationship as long as the governments; the tribal government, the city government...I'll use the city right now because that's where the relationship is really good. I think as long as the governments have that working relationship that they have now-trying to meet the needs, and trying to understand each other-keep that same path, it's going to grow. It's going to be very exciting, and a lot of progress happening where our tribe can be part of a lot of changes and a lot progress that's going to impact not only our membership but the city of Arlington. We are kind of doing that now; we are investing a lot of money into programs that are in Arlington. A lot of non-profit organizations receive funding from us that are a social service style program. We donate money to education. There are several elder homes in Northern Snohomish County, and in our last round of donation the elders made out like bandits. We must have hit 4 or 5 senior homes. By doing these things, reaching out to the outside community in Arlington, it starts developing that working trust; that we do care about what happens out there. The elders, not just tribal elders or tribal children, but elders in general. They need care. They need the attention too; the type of people who will come in and sit down and talk with them and listen; every elder has a story. The kids...going to Arlington School District each year-I speak to a lot of second, third, fourth and fifth grade kids and talk to them about the history of the Stillaguamish tribe. Why that's important is that this is their home and there is a rich history here that took place long before their history started. You try to get that across to them so they take ownership into that history because when those two histories clashed, there's a lot of things that happened, a lot of important things and they need to know these things. By investing our knowledge, our financial support into programs in Arlington, such as drug treatment, teen shelter, fire department, police department, you are creating the sustainability for their infrastructure that has impact on your infrastructure. We need to build those relationships

in areas of fire protection, law enforcement. We don't have a fire department; we rely on Arlington fire department, so we've got to support that. It's almost like an insurance policy that you hope you never have to cash in on. The last you want to do is have them come to your house and be doing CPR on your relative, or fight a fire on your house. But if you ever need it, you want the best. So, we've invested a lot into the fire department here. The same thing with law enforcement; we try to support them as much as we can. They're our safeguard in the community. That's another program; crank prevention, crime prevention, drug prevention. As I stated earlier, I would like to see that gone. We can't fight drugs and drug addiction just inside our reservation and think it's solved. As I said before, we've got to treat beyond that. We are already seeing impacts from non-native drug addiction, drug use and drug sales and crime affect our kids and our folks and our lives. So, we really reach out and support treatment facilities and programs like Snohomish County Meth Summit to educate the kids on the use of methamphetamines. Each year that's growing larger and larger and larger and we are a huge player in that. So, for a little tribe like us it's important to build those relationships, and working with the councils. The residence of this city, and tribal membership, they'll have their relationship as well. But, they won't have the power to do the work to make sure the laws mesh, make sure that the governmental structures are supporting these programs. They don't have that power to make that happen other than voting power. They're going to vote us *in* to do that job. So, if the governments fail because there's not an understanding of who we are and why, there's need to grow, that could break down. I think that would have huge effects not only to success of the tribe, but what we can provide for the community. We have to be a community-oriented tribe; being small and scattered parcels, we have no choice. So we're not making these choices to that because, "oh, gosh we have to." Go back to the culture; we're responsible for things that happen to our people. We're a generous tribe and very open and we want to continue that. We've got a lot of friends that are non-native. There's a lot of factors to it, we just can't ignore and build these walls and let that go. So you could say in a sense our relationships with Arlington and Snohomish County and the other cities is a key to our sustainability. If we're fighting amongst each other, what are we going to get done? We're not going to get anything done. We'll end up in court exhausting all kinds of money-lawyers will win. Then it's just going to rebuild hate. So too with that relationship with the general population out there that don't like to see the tribe grow, buy land. They feel we should pay taxes. We should be controlled by the city and the county. The ones that just don't get tribal government, the treaties and who we are. We're hoping that between the two governments we can educate those folks. So, in a sense that needs to be done because they don't understand; they fight every piece of land that we purchase, every business that we try to do, or projects that we do. We've got natural resource projects that we're doing here on the river and we're putting coded wire tags on the jaws of Coho Salmon. Our staff is out there doing this research and the tribe is getting phone calls, the department of fish and wild life is getting phone calls; "the tribe is out there taking all the salmon." Then they find out it's a research project, and that it's a joint project by the state and the tribes to better understand the salmon runs. Well to some, that doesn't make a difference. *We* shouldn't be doing it. It's that misunderstanding, trying to drop the barriers, that anger against the tribes, the ignorance about the tribes. We're seeing that in hunting where a lot of hunters and folks don't want to see the tribes hunt. They want us to hunt on the reservation and whatever their opinion is. You take all the animals that are harvested in the State of Washington; the tribes are only taking 4% of that whole harvestable number. That's the Western Washington tribes. That's not very many, not many at all. I think we took just about a total of

over 400 elk last year when the state took over 7,000. So you know we're fighting over 400 animals, these are table scrapes. The tribes almost feel like we're fighting over leftovers, and then our needs are not being met; our subsistence's ceremony needs are not being met. These are traditional foods that we don't have access to. We've got to go to the department of natural resources for the state, the feds, and whoever else to work our agreements so that we can access this resource...our culture. So, yeah, relationships with the governments are important because when those break down then those kinds of things don't happen.

DH (24:36) And one of the products you see then in your vision of the future would be access to those resources and a broader public understanding and who you are and your needs as a community.

SY (24:48) Yeah. Let's just take a funeral; you have a tribal leader that passes or an elder that is very well respected out there. You're going to have a large gathering. Our obligation is to feed them. It's not culturally appropriate for us to do our ceremonies and run down to Safeway and go buy half a side of beef and provide food. We send hunters out to go get elk or deer. Our elders will tell us, the cooks and the elders will tell us what they need; this is how many people are expected to be there, this is how much meat we need or how much fish. So we'll send hunters out to do that. Well, the idea isn't a fair chase sport type a hunt. When you've got a funeral coming up in 5 days, which is usually a 2 day thing, it's a long ceremony, and you've got people to feed, you don't play around. You send somebody out, if that means sending 5 or 6 guys out with rifles and you go out and get an elk, you go get an elk. You want that insurance. You don't just want one guy with a gun; your success rate is less. We'll that causes a little bit of issues with state hunters: "oh, we seen a bunch of Indians out there in a truck." First thing that comes to mind is that they are out wiping out the elk herd. They happen to get 2 or 3 elk, well there's how many people are coming to the services. A lot of that is a giveaway too; they come in to food that is going to be given away. That's traditional, what we did. If there's meat left over that's given out, that goes to the elders, the guest elders. So, just an understanding of that, whether you can get to them or not. I mean the ones that always have that wall built up; those are the ones you don't want to reach out too. You want to reach to the ones that are sitting on the fence, the ones that you can explain it: here's the facts, here's what's going on and they go, "Oh, I get it, okay." The ones that just flat out have their opinion, you're not going to change that. So, part of the education of that too is bringing those local leaders and regional leaders to your ceremonies, to your first Salmon ceremony. They see the prayers, they see the blessings they see the thanks for the food that was provided, and the importance of opening the prayer at the table. A lot our religious practices are pretty similar to other religious practices in some sense, especially when you have influence from the catholic missionaries here in Puget Sound. So, it helps when they're seeing it. They realize that, "oh okay, this does go to a use, it's not just 'they are not just out there shooting them up and that's the end of it.'"

DH (28:41) Your example of the funeral is a nice illustration of a relationship with the natural landscape and natural resources. Can you say more about what you see in your vision in terms of the relationship between your community and the natural landscape?

SY (28:59) I see there's more habitat protection in critical areas. Our spawning grounds for our salmon are getting to the point where when the Chinook are running the water flow is really low

and the temperature of the water will reach 70 degrees, 71, 72 degrees and those are temperatures that kill fish. That's way too high of a temperature. It will go from cool water, by morning, by mid-day a huge rise in temperature and that huge fluctuation shocks the fish and kills them and then you have bacterial funk problems in the water. So, that needs to be addressed. We're working on trying to figure out how we address those: look what it is the tribe needs to do is it creating more habitat on the river; is it working on the in-stream flows, and creating what water is taken out of our watershed. Of course, global warming, that whole issue is on the table. We're seeing the glaciers up on White Horse Mountain and the snow packs each year, they don't stay as long as they used to. These are factors between the tribes and the cities, county, federal government, state government. We are working on these issues. These are all impacts that go to that. Land use logging practices, farming practices...do you stop logging? No. Do you stop farming? No. What's gone on in the past is that they have looked at how those practices had operated and you change that practice. So, it goes back to managing practices above what's out there. Of course, it comes with some disagreement. Of course, logging companies don't want to change their logging practices because it might be an inconvenience, or it might be more of a financial impact to them. Farmers could be upset because they have to use less water, or they have to give up some of their property for a buffer along a stream. But in a sense, trying to get everybody to tie in that we're all responsible for that watershed, that life blood that comes through our homeland here. If the Stillaguamish River ends up where we don't have Chinook running up it anymore, that's a dead river. We don't have that gift of life coming back up river to spawn. That's a root to the life of that river; the Salmon go up there they spawn when they die, the carcasses feed all those nutrients back to the river and provide all those nutrients to all the plants along the river and food for all the life that is in that river. We lose the Salmon we lose a large chunk of life in that river, and that river doesn't mean anything to anyone anymore.

DH (32:44) You gave a couple of examples of practices that you wouldn't necessarily eliminate or change than how do you see them operating in a sustainable future.

SY (32:59) The logging I think will continue. I think they've done a great job on improving their practices by picking areas and logging in a certain manner so there are strips of habitat left for wildlife corridors. As well as not stripping down the vegetation so bad that there is nothing holding the hillsides together. So you don't have the landslides and the damage to the surface of the ground. Farming is slowly being pushed out, and that has been a very heated topic here in Stillaguamish Valley and in Snohomish Valley. What's going to happen to the farmers? Its' just not economically viable for them to operate under the conditions of the growth that is going on around here, and what it's costing them to operate, and the restrictions that are being put on them. These are places that are providing dairy cattle for us, and berry farms, and hay farms. There all very important to the infrastructure of this county. Not only tribal leaders but county and city and state leaders need to sit down and make sure that this part of the community here doesn't go away. They are a very important part. Now do the juggling act; how do you make sure the natural resources are taken care of, but yet the farmers are taken care of. Then throw growth management into that. I don't know, it's hard to say what would happen. I would like to envision that the farming is still here. Because as long as the farming's here we don't have the houses going in, we don't have huge housing developments, stuff like that go in, and the land use changing so bad that you're having water sucked out of the aquifer. A housing development, that's a lot of water that a house uses per year. So when you put a lot of houses down here in the

valley that is a direct taker out of the water. Where the farms, yeah they use water, but because of their water right, each water right here is different that's one thing we've been learning is looking at the water rights. Some are seasonal some aren't, it's a very complex issue. One that's almost like, wow! But we definitely have a scientist for that one (laughter).

DH (36:24) lets come back to then like within your community in terms of institutional capacities and just the nature of everyday life in your community. What more do you hope for the future?

SY (36:39) what I hope for?

DH (36:46) Yeah. You've already spoken to this in terms of some other things...

SY (36:46) I am hoping that education definitely is an important part of our everyday life and our membership, as well as job skills. Job skills is one that a lot of our tribal membership have really struggled to get to. When you don't have the governmental structure to provide the education for them to get the job skills, they don't get the jobs that they need to really promote their life to really get them moving; get the better paying jobs. I don't mean to make it sound like they don't have any jobs skills what so ever, but I mean job skills to help them boost their dreams, their career. That's what I mean by job skills, not just this person that's never worked before. But we've got a tribal member who wants to be a mechanic. That's what I mean by job skills; have that opportunity to do that. Raise our employment rate. I don't know what the numbers are right now, I don't have that with me, but I remember that they used to be really super high. That's something we have to try to create. We had a high dropout rate, kids dropping out of school. That doesn't exactly promote somebody getting a decent job. It's keeping the kids in school, higher education, job skills. Whether somebody wants to work for the tribe to help the tribe grow and succeed, or to move on to another type of career, but at least have the opportunity where they can fulfill those dreams and be an active part of the society that makes a difference. If it ends up that job isn't something that makes an active part of society but it is something that they want to do to help them achieve that life.

DH (39:31) With those people in mind what would be some of the worldviews, core values and beliefs that you envision them having in a sustainable future?

SY (39:43) That one is kind of hard having to speak for some of them on what they would see, the worldview. I think right now some of the worldview towards tribes is to realize that the tribe is more than just casinos. The perception-you hear jokes on TV, someone will say something about casinos, or, in the newspaper about Indian casinos. But the casino is only a part of who we are. They have become a catalyst for us to grow. Tribes know gaming isn't forever, and it's not the answer to everything. So I guess the world view would be to look beyond all that and see us as a people: what we invest into our community; what we try to do that influence governments to do the right thing for the environment; who we work with, how we work, the dynamics of what our culture can bring into richness of the community.

DH (41:41) What are some other core values then you would like to see people hold that guides them in their everyday life?

SY (41:50) Care for elders. To see elders in this country not have the healthcare that they should have is tough, because they're the ones that structured life to get to where we're at right now. They're the ones that did the work that we're doing right now. They're trying to secure our future and then when they've reached that stage in life when they are no longer able or want to continue on to structure this country, this state, into a better function, it's almost like they are just left to hang. All the sudden they're not working, so they don't have healthcare, and the healthcare they get isn't sufficient enough to take care of them; their medications cost too much. My grandparents, my great-grandparents are the ones that made things happen and grow to where I'm at right now; the things that I am able to enjoy. Our veterans, I am seeing them almost like left behind. We need to find a way to take care of them, and we can't forget them. They set the foundation for us.

DH (43:43) Any other core values?

SY (43:45) It will probably come to me later (laughter).

DH (43:55) One that I've heard in a number of other interviews, and you can either agree or disagree, is that value of respect, applied to a lot of different things. What does that mean to you, that value of respect?

SY (44:07) Listen to your heart. Not be, I guess, judgmental. No matter what your religious belief is, you see more people trying to remove God from your everyday life: can't talk about God at school, can't talk about God at work, can't talk about God at the office, and in the government, wherever. They're constantly pushing religion out. Despite what religious background you are, it's here (*pointing towards heart*). If you don't have love in your heart that opens up you to very contentious racial boundaries, sexual orientation boundaries, people not agreeing with homosexuality--whether it's right or wrong, you don't attack the person, is what I mean on that. Political beliefs, all that stuff comes with it. Not having love and understanding in your heart. You approach things, you answer to one thing. Let the spirit lead your heart.

DH (46:00) Spirituality has come up in other interviews as well, would you say more about that and how that relates to this conversation we are having about sustainability?

SY (46:11) Yeah, I think it does, because in Indian country spirituality has a big play into what we do. Like I said, all these things that we live on: the food, the land, the tides, the clams, oysters, elk, deer, the cedar tree, these are all gifts. We are care takers of these things. Our language is a gift. We believe that the creator gave us our beautiful language so that way we can talk to each other. It's our belief that our language is so sacred and such a great gift that it was always used to lift somebody up, to always honor, never use to put somebody down or cause harm to somebody. You don't talk bad about people. There you get back to our cultural beliefs, maybe it can wash away a lot of these things. Goes back to realizing your spiritual purity of just who you are, and the things around you, our responsibilities, and that connection with God, or as some put it, the creator. You go back to that and you put that love back in your heart, get rid of the anger, get rid of the jealousy, get rid of the envy, all those bad emotions that play a part in destruction in all of our lives. You see that just in the politics between democrats and

republicans. There can never be a debate or a political showdown between the two parties without dirt being flung. You guys have been put in that place as leaders for a reason. Cut it out, use your heart. You need to go back to the spirit and let the spirit speak to you. Go with your heart, because otherwise we can sit there and have a disagreement and as long as I have love in my heart, and I listen with open ears, and try to understand where you're coming from. Listen to each other. Doesn't mean I have to agree with you. But if I go in with a prejudice opinion about you right off the bat about who you are, or what you're about, or whatever, you're going into a very difficult situation.

DH (49:27) Staying at the level of the individual here is an exercise in psychology to draw out elements of identity and self-concept and so I am wondering if you be able to imagine yourself as a citizen in your community in the future where sustainability has taken form and what would be some of the "*I am*" statements that would define who you are as an individual. This is the form I showed you earlier. What are some *I am* statements that capture that sense of self.

SY (50:02) Do you want me to say them as I write them?

DH (50:07) That would be great or simply write them.

SY (50:10) One would be, I'll just say it; I am thankful. Thankful for the gifts and opportunities that were given to me, and for the ones that got me here. I am happy. I am healthy. If my vision and the tribe's vision of sustainability comes true, we're going to have healthy tribal members. We're proud of our dental clinic. That's one benefit of having a small tribe is you are able to have that quality of service. You can service your tribal membership. So, for low income and tribal member that aren't working, we take care of what we can for their dental work and your basic dental care. For kids, the tribe just takes care of them. We figure it's better that they come in and the tribe loses the money right now, taking care of these kids teeth then it is five years or ten years down the road "this kid needs major dental work." It's going to cost them a lot; not having good dental hygiene. Chips away at a person's confidence; they are not so willing to walk up and go, "Hi! How are you?" when they have tooth decay or they are missing teeth. So, it gives them the confidence about themselves. Healthier. So, I think that's a very important aspect to what I would see being in that place. I am respectful; using the gifts that were given to us, respect of those, make sure that they get passed on. Whether it's the knowledge of our culture, or if it's our service as a tribe can provide. I am respect for those gifts that were given not to be used or taken advantage of. I am willing to share...

DH (54:38) You had spoken to this earlier, the idea of sharing and its importance to your cultural history...

SY (54:55) Ahh, potlatches?

DH (54:58) Yeah.

SY (55:00) Honor your guests that come to your home. So, when we have our gatherings you honor them with gifts. You provide the best of food. The food is prepared in a certain way. Gifts are prepared in a certain way. It starts here (*pointing to heart*). The cooks that are chosen

to cook the food, usually in some tribes and some families there are certain folks that will do the cooking. And preparing the gifts, when you do it with an open and loving heart-you never prepare meals that people are going to eat or gifts for people to take home with when your heart is real heavy, or you are distressed, or you are real angry. You never do that. You put what your spirit has and you're putting that into the food. When you have guests come over and you hold the potlatches and you have giveaways, you want to lift up your guests and welcome them. A lot of times they come and they share things. They are there to witness things. They are there to remember and share a history of what happened during that time if it's a naming ceremony. I use that one the most because it's the most common one out there that isn't so secretive. A lot of our ceremonies are kept and held real close and not much information is given out on those and what happens. So you honor your guests by sharing. In the old days they would giveaway mountain goat wool, cedar, cedar roots, food, pies, drums, canoes, baskets. They would make things to giveaway. So, you take those gifts that were given to you, utilize them, make them, then pass those gifts on so. I am proud...of who I am, and of my people, and my relatives. I am long-lived. I want to be here for a while (laughter). I am growing old. Some people think that's a bad thing.

DH (59:37) That's good and you will have an opportunity in the final transcript to add more if you feel like it at that time. We have maybe a minute and a half on this tape and I am wondering if there is anything else at this point that you would like to add to summarize or contribute to your thinking on sustainability and the future you would like to see?

SY (1:00:05) I think the whole thing has just reaffirmed that we need a land base. We need the education of our tribal members to become the new leaders. We need the education of our leaders now. We need that infrastructure because of having that consolidation of land to bring everything together, so that way we can do the business we need to do: protecting our culture, protecting our natural resources, protecting our elders and or kids. Recording our history-I talked about that off camera. We are videotaping elders and doing the research that we need to do and documenting everything. Once an elder passes and we don't have what's in here (*pointing to head*) or what's in their heart, when they pass their voice is gone forever. We need to protect that, and record that, and get that down in the historical files so we've got that for future use. The tribal government needs to grow as county, state, city jurisdictions grow. Tribes have to stand up and grow with the changes, but still remembering to use the same practices that we ask the other jurisdiction to practice, and respecting each other's jurisdictions. Understanding that tribal needs are different than county needs, and city needs. Our needs are different. In a sense, we are a different people.

--break--

DH (0:00) We've talked about your vision of a sustainable future for your community, and in that also covered a lot of the actions and strategies to take to get there. We want to give an opportunity to talk to the greatest obstacles that you face in achieving a sustainable future for your community.

SY (0:23) One of the biggest obstacles the tribe faces is for our sustainability is county government. Every time we purchase a piece of land and we try to get it into Trust, they appeal

it. They want the tribe to only purchase land where it's already zoned for that type of use. Which is fine if it was in an area where we could put it into Trust. That would be easy. Anything that's not on reservation or not adjacent to reservation land, or adjacent to Trust land, then it goes back to Washington DC and it takes forever to get that land into Trust now, because of the gaming issues. The department of the interior and the states are really worried about off reservation gaming and the expansion of gaming. So, they've really tightened up the regulation on Trust land applications that are off reservations and not adjacent. That's why we need to consolidate. We have to pick a spot of our many parcels and figure out which one we are going to grow from, and that's what we'll do. Meeting with Snohomish County, that is basically what they asked us to do. They wanted us to pick a spot and go out a couple of miles, draw a circle, and never buy land outside that. You can't ask anybody to do that. There is nothing saying that the tribe can't go to Oregon and purchase land. That's out of our area, so odds us getting that into Trust is phenomenal. It would probably never happen. But they're worried about the impacts the tribes going to have on their growth management, their impacts to their judicial responsibilities, law enforcement, emergency management and taxation. They're all valid concerns. But at the same time we need the county to understand that *we* have those needs, we have those responsibilities and we need to meet those. We can't do it with scattered parcels of land, or a small amount of land. If we were stopped right now, and it was "you are going to have to do all your dreams, everything, and everything that the tribes needs to do to sustain itself with the land you have," we are going to be changing the zoning on a lot of land that isn't suited. We are going to be taking wet lands and areas that are critical and start saying, "Okay, we're going to have to chop these down in order to get this here done, in order to build our infrastructure." And that's what we *don't* want to do. When we got our recognition back, some of the land that the tribe had purchased was inexpensive but where they bought it, the land really wasn't usable. Over 160 acres of it down on the river floods 2 to 3 times a year; can't do much on that, but we can build from it. There in Trust, we can build from it and grow and get the properties next to it where they're up on high ground and do some things. It's just getting the county to understand that the tribe has needs. Our needs are completely different than what their needs are. Our governmental structures differ. We don't have that many tribal members that are going to come in and want do a business on tribal land. We don't have that many privately owned business operations in Indian Country, let alone in our tribe. I know of three tribal members that have their own business, and it just wouldn't be viable for one of them to up and move his warehouse and put it out here on one of our properties. Then a couple others own their own construction companies. We've got to look at other avenues, as I stated earlier. Look at other options to lease the land out. If it's a tribal member, we are able to put a tribal tax on that business; we collect our own tax. What government doesn't rely on tax? There's also that perception from the community that we've got to work on that's really holding us up, is the fact that they're mad that the tribes don't pay tax. "A tribal business does not pay tax, income tax, B&O tax." The tax goes to the proper jurisdiction. So if the business is in the city, the county looses out because the city would get the tax. Some of the statement about that isn't correct, because if it's a tribally owned business, the employees have to pay tax. They pay their federal income tax. There is also the perception that the tribes don't pay a tax. Tribal members, they do. The tribal government doesn't pay a tax for our lands that we own. If a tribal member owns the land, they pay taxes. They buy a car, they pay tax. Their phones, they pay a state tax. The taxes are there. We pay income tax, we pay social security, and everything else that's required. But the tribal government doesn't. When we purchase a piece of property and start moving forward, "okay,

this is where we need,” then we find that property. For example, we’re looking at a piece here in Arlington. It’s already zoned for the use that we want to use it for. We are going to move our behavioral health clinic, which is growing, and our counseling services and move it to the location. It’s in a light industrial area zoned for this kind of use. We want to move it there because the city is growing. Well, where our clinic is, they’ve got all the confidentiality that they need. The clients can get there, nobody actually sees who the clients are that are coming in and out. Well, Walmart is going in behind it, so how much confidentiality do you have at a treatment facility in the middle of a parking lot to a super center? We need to protect the confidentiality of our clients, so we’re moving the building. Even though it’s zoned for that kind of use and the service that we provide we still get flack. The county raises a stink about it. Since it’s in the city jurisdiction, the county won’t comment, but they will still call the city and say, “hey, fight this. Don’t let the tribe do it.” That’s where our relationship with the city has been very helpful, because they’ve been very open-armed about the tribal services that we are providing and bringing them in; everybody can go to it. So, having these differences in the county government and the tribal government the pains on how we should grow is a huge block for us. If we would have been lucky enough, the government, they promised us our own reservation. If we would have had it, a nice big chunk of land, we wouldn’t be in this situation. But we are. So we have to do what we feel is needed to meet our needs, to help us grow. When the county says, “pick a spot, go out 3 miles and only grow from there.” Well, we did that. Okay, that’s making sense we’ll try that--it doesn’t mean we’re not going to buy over here too. But to centralize for our major controversial land use issues: right now it could be “build a duplex” that’s controversial, because the tribe owns it. We decide to do that and now that’s not good enough. Now it’s, “oh, well, uh, we’ve got to answer to our constituents about this. How do you expect us to do that?” Just not getting the help and support from them. They say they promote the tribe growing, but we’re not seeing that politically. To have that kind of stumbling block makes the tribe real nervous about sharing our vision at its fullest with the county government, because we don’t feel there’s enough trust there. Then it works the other way around too, because we’re being quiet, the county doesn’t trust us. So we’ve got to build those relationships and that way we can get our needs met. The realistic picture of this is not like tribe is all of a sudden, *BOOM*, have 500 acres up there on the hill, up here where the casino’s at, and all of the sudden there’s gas stations, a truck stop, restaurants, mini malls, we have our own city. That’s not what our vision is for us to be. Our vision is we need everything that a government needs to operate, and a community. So what are those required? Your health services, education, housing, your museum, cultural center--every city has one of those, they’ve got a historical museum, Stanton’s got one, Arlington’s got one. When it comes to grocery stores, does the tribe need one? I don’t see that being in our future. I mean, we’ve got huge grocery stores here, Costco. Why compete with something that’s already there on that grand of a scale? Fire protection, law enforcement. How do we promote tribal business? We can’t do that with small chunks of land. We need to get that base out there. Then we also face the community. It’s just amazing what’s come out of people’s mouths, and hear their ideas. Like, “we understand you’re sovereign, I get that, but...” Soon as they say, “but,” you know you’re speaking to someone...they’ve already got the wall built up. Their opinions made, and you’re not going to change their mind. They want you to grow only to the capacity to their lives aren’t impacted, and only to the capacity that we help the sustainability of their city, of their county. So it can’t work that way. You can’t be self government, and then rely on a lower form of government, like a subdivision--I don’t mean lower form--no disrespect, but a tribe is sovereign dependent upon a

sovereign. That is what a state is. So, you look at the placement of where the tribe is, we are equal to the state of Washington, then you've got a subdivision of that government trying to tell you what your needs are and how you're going to do it, and why you're going to do it. It don't work. They don't understand. So it's getting that education out there. But when you have neighbors up here that every time we buy a piece of land they want to know what's going to be used for, "What are you doing?" "I want answers." When we've had our realty department go out there out there and talk to folks, "here's a line of properties we would like to look at to connect our properties, go see if they're willing to sell." We've had a lot of mixed responses where some folks are willing to sell, some don't, but don't care about the tribe and what they're doing. We've had comments such as, "They don't have a right to buy land, in fact, it's illegal," and, "We conquered them a long time ago; they don't have a right." To hear that you were conquered a long time ago, "hmm, now wait a minute..." You almost want put a mandatory thing out there that anyone out there who has an opinion like that, you need to go back to a civics class (laughter). They start learning things all over again. Everything goes back to the treaty. They wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the treaty. We signed-well, we... we did...our ancestors were there, we were there, Stillaguamish, along with many, many, many other tribes. We were there. We agreed to cede over our territory for certain things: health care, education, housing to be able to continue our cultural practices, to hunt, fish and gather. So that way people could come and live in peace. If we wouldn't have signed that treaty it probably would have turned out to gone to war. So non-natives have a treaty obligation as well, because we granted them by signing that over to come out here. We still hold an easement on that by some of the things that were guaranteed to us in recognition of our governments. A lot of folks feel that the treaties were entered into illegally. I don't think so; the governments recognized us as a government structure: we had our tribal leaders, we had our doctors, we had our policemen, we had our judges, we had our educators, we had our architects, we had our hunters, we had our structure as a government, and it was recognized. It's an all around education of some people, and trying to break down those barriers. A lot of tribes don't face this. We do. I wish we didn't have to. It would make it easier if we already had our reservation. What we need to do is, for our council members right now, is to keep getting educated ourselves. There are a lot of things in the law that we've got to learn. I'll admit, when it comes to reading the law (laughter)...I always reach back for the attorney and ask him the questions. There is a lot of educating on our part, because everything that we do, we've got to make sure we're watching out for our future. We've got to look seven generations down the road. What is it that our kids are going to need? We have an idea, we've expressed that we talked about, what our ideas are for a sustainable future, what our needs are going to be. But who is to say that's really what's going to happen. As fast as growth is coming this way, as fast as this technology changes...we've really got to watch down the road, where we're going and what we're doing right now. Stay strong. Stand up for what we definitely believe in. Don't lose our course in caring for the community. Even though we have a difference of opinion with the folks up here, don't let them interfere with the relationships that we have. We try to keep fostering the good relationships that we have. The ones that are really bitter that make things really difficult for us, we don't ignore them, but you don't want to create more problems and more fights with them, so your strategies change.

DH (19:25) Would you add anything else to this question about obstacles you have to overcome.

SY (19.31) No I don't think so...I think I've pretty much hit everything: we've got to educate

our kids, our community, get the land, and work on our culture. It's just *focus*. Stay on that, pass on what we've done to the new leaders that come on board. Hopefully, when the new leaders come on board, the vision that they might have might not be completely different, and who's to say it won't? Maybe the vision that we've been taking on what's going on right now, and what we hear from tribal members, and going forward on, what's to say that this council is no longer in place, then we get new council members, and then decide to totally turn it around and say, "that's not where we want to go, this is where we want to go." So, that's an unseen view of what could happen. Hopefully, if that does happen maybe they've got greater ideas that could be more successful.

DH (21:01) Before closing I know you are concerned about repeating yourself but I encourage you to repeat yourself (laughter). Are there any ideas or points from our conversation as a whole that you'd like to emphasize before we close.

SY (21:17) I think on the social service aspect, programs for the community...I would really love to emphasize that: on cleaning up on drug addiction; behavior health; dental care for our membership in the community. We're really looking at expanding our clinical services fast. One of the things that we hope to do is by this expansion open our doors to everybody. We are going to be able to provide care for our tribal members. If you're a tribal member, we are going to make sure we find a way to make sure your needs get met. If we can get a facility put in where it's a nice medical clinic: we have an orthodontist, we have doctors, specialist that deals with infant issues. Just grow, so that way if a tribal member needs to go to the dentist and our clinic says, "Okay, we don't do root canals here so we'll have to send you out for that," well, send him over to our other clinic, that need will be taken care of. So if it's in house, and we're taking care of them, our idea is to try to wipe out the medical bills so that way their medical needs are taken care of. Keep growing with our counseling services, provide for grief counseling, marriage counseling, teenage counseling, suicide prevention, drug addiction, how far can we go with this? The nice thing about it when the tribal government owns it and how its structured the programs become self-sufficient, they support themselves. On start up, the tribe supports it, but we'd like these departments to be self sufficient so that we're providing these services to our tribal members when they need it. Physical therapy, the things out there that we've got planned in healthcare is huge. We're looking at taxation issues. Being a small tribe is being able to buy insurance for every tribal member, so they'll have medical insurance. That's a huge step to make, a financial cost to the tribe, but, it goes back to the health and well being of our tribal membership. You give them that health care they are not going to be so worried about going to the doctor and getting the medication that they need because their medical bills will be cut down. Not having to worry about the \$65 doctor visit or whatever it is they have to pay every time they just go see their doctor because they have a cold

DH (2:04) Anything else?

SY (2:05) No, not at this time (laughter).

DH (2:10) I would like to thank you for sharing your knowledge and perspective with us today it was a pleasure and an honor.

SY: Thank you.

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