

# Ecotrust

## TRANSCRIPT

### ***Termination: The Attempt to Destroy and the Rebuilding of the Siletz Tribes***

Speakers: Ed Ben (Siletz) and Bud Lane (Siletz)

Held on January 19, 2022

Presented by the Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program

This is the second of four briefings that address the theme, *Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands*. Here is the recording:

<https://vimeo.com/668682840>

**Lisa Watt** 00:01

Hello, everyone, and good morning. On behalf of the board and staff of Ecotrust, I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural Indigenous Leadership Briefing Series and to this, the second briefing *Termination: The Attempt to Destroy and the Rebuilding of the Siletz Tribes*. We'd like to open our time together with a blessing from Sam Robinson, vice chairman of the Chinook Indian Nation.

**Sam Robinson** 00:37

It's good to be here today and get everyone started in the right way. I always like to thank the Saghalee Tyee, the chief above for this wonderful [audio cuts out] I'd like to thank the ancestors for the hard work that they did to get us to today and as a group and share the ways. [audio cuts] In doing a blessing, I often like to start the day with a song so I'm going to share a Chinook blessing song with you all this morning to get us going in the right way. [Indigenous singing]

Masi, masi. (Thank you.)

**Lisa Watt** 03:40

Thank you, Sam, for bringing good spirits into this space this morning. We greatly appreciate your presence and your gift.

My name is Lisa Watt and I am the director of the Indigenous Leadership Program here at Ecotrust. I am also a citizen of the Seneca Nation, Six Nations, from the Allegheny Reservation in western New York State. And I am joined today by my two Ecotrust colleagues, Indigenous

storytelling fellow and a citizen of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Jessica Douglas, and our communications and marketing manager, Megan Foucht.

At this point in a program, a land acknowledgement is usually recited but not here at Ecotrust. While land acknowledgments are intended to be respectful, they oversimplify complex tribal histories and fail to recognize the ongoing impacts of colonization that tribal communities continue to live with to this day.

**Jessica Douglas 04:40**

In place of a land acknowledgement, Ecotrust staff, and especially the Native staff, are asking you to support Indigenous communities by taking action. We ask that you:

1. Give land back to tribes.
2. Protect the environment and salmon. Tribal cultures depend on them.
3. Insist that the United States respect tribal sovereignty and uphold its trust responsibility to tribes, which includes appropriate levels of federal funding to support tribal needs. Many promises of tribes still need to be kept.
4. Elect officials and judges who understand tribal governments, relationships, and law.
5. Invest in tribal economies.
6. Challenge and reject all stereotypes about Indigenous people.
7. Insist that your children and grandchildren are taught accurate information about the histories, cultures, and contemporary lives of Indigenous people in your school system. And,
8. Inform yourself about issues impacting tribal communities and speak up.

The sovereignty, well-being, cultures, and languages of Indigenous peoples are borne of their homelands and that makes these lands and waters precious to Native communities. All of us have the responsibility to treat them with the respect and care they deserve and to steward them carefully for the next generations. We need to do more. Please do your part. Thank you.

**Lisa Watt 06:08**

The Indigenous Leadership Briefing Series is the lead up to the Indigenous Leadership Awards or as we know them, the ILA's, which will be relaunched later this spring. The ILA's is a celebration of the determination, wisdom, and continuum of Indigenous leadership across our region. At its heart, the ILA is about Indigenous survival. To date, 56 Indigenous leaders throughout our region have been recognized. They represent many different landscapes, cultures, and languages. This relaunch gives us the opportunity to once again recognize the outstanding work of tribal leaders dedicated to uplifting the environmental, cultural, economic, and social conditions of their communities and homelands.

This free briefing series is intended to highlight the achievements of Indigenous communities by looking at moments in American history and showing how Indigenous leaders responded. We are asking the important question, when faced with seemingly insurmountable challenges - when the odds are against them -- how do tribal leaders and communities respond? The events described in this four-part series are stories of vision, courage, and determination. The goals are to present accurate information from Indigenous perspectives and voices, dispel stereotypes, and demonstrate the power and influence of Indigenous leadership. We believe examples of Indigenous leadership are around all of us every day. We just need to look.

Before we dive in, I'd like to thank everyone who joined us for the first briefing and especially thank everyone who completed our feedback survey. The information you shared has been invaluable in helping us improve this series and to think about the future. You gave us some wise words of advice and a few criticisms, plus you shared some wonderful comments and insightful ideas. So, thank you very much.

One of the comments in the feedback was this: what is Ecotrust? Ecotrust is a 30-year-old nonprofit organization located here in Portland, Oregon, working to inspire fresh thinking that creates economic opportunity, social equity, and environmental well-being for all. Few people know that Ecotrust was founded among Indigenous peoples, specifically the Haisla First Nation and the protection of the 800,000-acre Kitlope Heritage Conservancy on the central coast of British Columbia. If you would like to learn more, please consider watching the YouTube video of Ecotrust founder Spencer Beebe's 2011 TEDx Portland video, where he talks about the founding of Ecotrust, the Magic Canoe, and how we approach our work.

We were also told to stop watching the clock and take our foot off the pedal, which we're going to do today. So, we might go past 12 noon, and if we do and you have to leave, you can watch the recording of this session later on.

As for today's briefing, we're going to talk about a dark period in American history for Native people, when in 1953, the U.S. Congress passed a series of laws that would become some of the most destructive policies ever initiated against Indian people. Then we will discuss the Confederated Tribes of Siletz's efforts then and now to protect and rebuild their community.

Our first speaker will be Ed Ben, a Navy veteran who served in World War II. Mr. Ben was actively involved in the Tribes' restoration efforts after the termination acts were passed and was selected to the first tribal council after restoration.

Our second speaker will be Bud Lane. Bud is the current vice chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Tribal Council, a position that he has held off and on since 1987. In addition, he is a knowledge holder and a teacher of the Athabaskan language and culture

bearer of Siletz traditions and basketry. Bud is a recipient of a 2007 Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Award.

**Jessica Douglas 10:13**

Today's briefing will be a slightly different format than our last one. Lisa will have a conversation with Ed Ben for 20 minutes and I will do the same with Bud. We will take questions at the end, so please feel free to put them in the Q&A section. This session is being recorded and will be posted on our website on the following Monday, January 24th.

Now, before we interview our respected Siletz elders, we wanted to take the time to briefly speak about what exactly the era of termination was and the ways it impacted tribal nations. The 1950s and 1960s are called the termination era in federal Indian policy because the United States Congress, led by then President Harry Truman, adopted a series of laws directed at dismantling tribal sovereignty. The idea was to force tribal members to assimilate into mainstream, English-speaking, Christian-American society by getting rid of reservations and stripping tribes of their lands, by terminating all federal treaty obligations to tribal nations, and by terminating all government programs intended to aid tribal people. In other words, Native people would no longer be citizens of a sovereign, tribal nation. They would be American citizens without ties to a tribe who were expected to give up their land, cultural identity, and heritage.

The U.S. government use several tactics and policies to carry out its plan. The first tool was actual termination. Congress passed House Concurrent Resolution 108 in 1953, which called for the ending of its federal trust relationship with tribes and terminating their status as American Indians as rapidly as possible. More than 100 tribes were terminated under this policy, and over a million acres of land were taken out of tribal possession.

The second tool was relocation programs such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs relocation program of 1956. The BIA relocated people from reservation and villages into the urban U.S. cities for training and employment. By 1960, a total of 33,466 Indigenous people had been relocated.

A third tool was the passage of Public Law 280 which extended state jurisdiction into Indian Country. Tribes affected by Public Law 280 saw it as undermining tribal sovereignty because it was imposed on them without consent or even consultation and it caused, and continues to cause, a great deal of confusion over jurisdiction in states where it applies.

The era of termination was devastating for tribal nations across America. In Oregon, specifically, the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act of 1954 impacted more than 2,100 tribal members of more than 60 different bands and tribes native to Oregon.

**Lisa Watt 13:14**

Thank you, Jessica. And now it's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Ed Ben. Hello, Ed.

**Ed Ben 13:46**

Hello.

**Lisa Watt 13:50**

And welcome. We're happy to have you. Ed, how old were you when you first heard about termination?

**Ed Ben 14:00**

Well, I would have been not quite 20 years old yet. Termination came about in the early 1950s. I was discussing with Bud Lane one day, I said, the date has escaped me and I couldn't remember exactly when it came about. But I said, in my lifetime, it was not a date such as my birthday or Thanksgiving or Christmas. It wasn't a date that I was ever going to take time to celebrate so I never remembered when termination really came up. I remember attending meetings before 1950 where it was discussed at tribal gatherings but for the exact date, I can't give you exactly how old I was but I was born in 1947. I would have been 20 years old.

**Lisa Watt 15:40**

So, how did you how did you first hear about termination? And did you understand what it meant?

**Ed Ben 15:47**

I don't remember when we first heard about it but I guess it was when they started bringing papers over there to the tribal general council meeting, trying to explain what termination was going to do. But at that time, it probably didn't concern some of us because they had already taken all of our land, except just a few acres. They had, like I said, taken all of our land and, as far as benefits, benefits had stopped years before then. You know, we used to have, when I was a mere child, we had medical benefits which amounted to a doctor coming from Salem over to Siletz once a week if that was convenient for them to come over and meet with and hold sessions up there on Government Hill if people were sick. On one occasion, my brother was due to get his tonsils taken out. So he was going to be sent to Chemawa for a week, because a doctor would call him back to Chemawa to get his tonsils taken out. Then you have to stay there for a week until the doctor came back to Siletz the following week.

At the same time, they were sending many Indian children to sanitariums for having tuberculosis. As near as we can determine the way they determined whether you had tuberculosis was they'd give you a shot in the arm and if you reacted to that shot, you must

have had tuberculosis. So then they send you off to Lapwai and Tacoma. I had gotten the shot and I reacted because there were relatives that lived at our house that had tuberculosis before. So, the shot simply tells you that you had been exposed to tuberculosis as far as I know. They were going to ship me off to either Tacoma or Lapwai. My dad said no, you've not x-rayed his chest. 'Take him to Chemawa and x-ray his chest.' So they sent me to Chemawa and my instructions from my parents was 'you'll be there to help take care of your baby brother'. So, I went out to Chemawa and spent a week there in bed because they wouldn't let me up to do anything but lay in bed because I was considered a patient. At two o'clock in the afternoon, they would come by and take all of our reading material away and we asked the question 'why?' 'Well, it's nap time'.

So, those were the kind of medical benefits we were experiencing. Dentists would come over about once a year and examine you and sometimes they'd pull a tooth. There was no novocaine or whatever. They would just drill away and you would scream and what they say is 'better pull the tooth' and that's kind of medical [benefits we had]. You know, people talk about medical [benefits they] think we had. They try to relate it to the medical services to the general population now. We never had anything like that. The health benefits we had were nothing. If we really had a serious health problem, our families and friends would pay and take care of you, send you to a local doctor.

**Lisa Watt 21:54**

So, you didn't have very much land anymore at termination and the services you did have were substandard. When termination came along, how did termination impact what you did have?

**Ed Ben 22:19**

Well, it created a situation where Indian people that did have land were given deeds to the land or the property and then end up paying taxes, of course. But Indian people back then suffered the problem of not knowing enough about having a will. If you got land, like my family [did, we] still had my grandfather and grandmother's allotment. Unfortunately, my grandmother had made a will [but] my grandfather didn't. My grandfather died pretty young so he didn't have a will. Well, my dad's sister had a big family and on my grandmother's property, it was pretty well spelled out who would inherit that 80 acres and end up paying taxes on it.

On my grandfather's land, there were hundreds of descendants and came to the decision, well, 'who is going to pay the taxes?' Well, to solve that problem, my dad and his two brothers decided 'we best just sell the property and then divide the money up between everybody.' Because in the end, either my dad and his two brothers would end up having to pay the taxes for everybody else or, if nobody paid the taxes, they'd lose it. I think there were a number of people that were in that same situation.

When they decided to dispose of the land, hundreds of people might end up laying claim to the land. Heck, there was one man that I never knew even existed who participated in timber sales from my grandfather's property. When the property was sold, he also he also got payment for that, a person I never ever knew existed. In some instances, I learned that still goes on in some reservations in Oregon that some Indian people still have not learned the importance of a will.

**Lisa Watt 26:25**

When termination came about, what was the community's reaction? What were people saying to each other?

**Ed Ben 28:29**

There wasn't much discussion that I knew. I had already left Siletz. I left Siletz in 1952 to move here to Salem. We were too busy, when I lived there, just out earning a living, putting food on the table, paying for your own health problems. We were all involved working in the logging industry. It was prevalent at that time. When you got old enough, it was our tradition to get a job in logging. So, we were more involved in just continuing to do what we did before.

Then, as far as some of us were concerned, the federal government was not providing us with anything at all. We had one strip of land downriver from Siletz that still needed to be disposed of at termination time. That's all we had left, except the allotments that people had spread out or what we used to call Upper Farm, the area upriver from Siletz, and Lower Farm, [the area] downriver from Siletz, were the few allotments there in Siletz. But we just knew that we were gonna have to continue life and I don't think we really understood what it was gonna amount to.

Some of us continued to fish, some of us continued to hunt. My father never, ever let us quit dancing. Our family and our relatives still continued to carry on our Native dancing and as time went on, we learned how to do powwow dancing [as well].

It was difficult times for some of us if we wanted to associate with other tribes because some of the younger people in the tribes shunned us. They called us the 'sell out Indians.' You know, 'you sold your Indianness, so don't associate with us.' But that was usually the younger people. The older people still showed us respect and never treated us any different[ly] than they treated us before termination.

**Lisa Watt 31:01**

When it came time to be restored, it sounds like the community came together. What was the process to be restored?

**Ed Ben 31:09**

Bud will probably cover that but my observation may be different than other people. I used to hear a lot of talk about righting the wrongs that the government did to us but generally, their discussions were 'we need to get repaid for the land that they took from our original reservation'. Never heard much discussion about what we finally accomplished. It was usually about the land that we lost after we were incarcerated on the reservation. A lot of times, my friends would get together over a half a case of beer, or a case of beer, and discuss what the government did by taking all of our reservation because we lost hunting and fishing areas and that was most important to some people back in those days.

Once a small group of people decided to get together to change it, it became difficult to even convince some of the people in Siletz that lived through termination to join in with us. But lots of things happened to our tribe that probably impacted us more than termination in the eyes of the people, such as World War II. Prior to World War II, the Indian ladies had their organization that took up their time. Most of them were not working outside the home, they basically took care of the home and females' responsibility were more family oriented. When World War II broke out, most of the men left the reservation and [were] exposed to other kinds of living than the reservation. The women went to work in the shop in a sawmill because there were not a lot of males left to operate the big sawmill that logged all of our timberland.

Back in the days when they bought our timber, they said they bought the land, too, at about a nickel an acre. When my dad and his brothers got ready to sell the 160 acres that they were going to have to do something about, they were first offered \$10 an acre. Part of it was riverfront frontage right there in Siletz now and, probably if you bought a lot on it on the river where their property was, you'd pay thousands and thousands of dollars now. They were offered \$10 an acre. And that's what happened to a lot of Indian people during termination. Land was bought for a little or nothing.

**Lisa Watt 36:33**

That's all very, very interesting. What was your reaction when you heard that the tribes had been restored?

**Ed Ben 37:04**

My reaction was, I need to go party. I need to go eat and celebrate and help [organize] a powwow and get our people back to do the first celebration. Because in one of our meetings with our attorney after the restoration bill passed, he said, "By the way, I forgot to tell you, folks, when you first met with us, with the [Native American Rights Fund], and I was assigned to help you with your restoration efforts, I never told you folks that you what you intend to do is impossible, I didn't tell you that."



He said, "But now we've got it done and so it wasn't impossible. Nobody goes to Congress and gets law changed. Nobody does that." So, we were not only not only extremely happy for having accomplished it but we were extremely proud that we were the first tribe in Oregon and only the second tribe in the United States that accomplished what we accomplished. And we were the first tribe in the United States that accomplished it without having prior reservation land to take back to Congress and say, 'We need your help managing our land.' We had no land. The Menominee got restoration, they had land to take back to Congress to get help managing. So we were the first tribe in the United States that had nothing to take back to Congress and to offer them an opportunity to assist us in our efforts.

**Lisa Watt** 40:17

Thank you very much for all the information you shared. This is where Bud is going to pick up the story. Thank you so much.

**Bud Lane** 40:46

Thank you.

**Jessica Douglas** 40:48

Hello. Awesome. I guess we'll start with, how old were you when you heard about termination? And did you understand it? What were your thoughts?

**Bud Lane** 41:01

Well, I can't tell you exactly when I heard about it. You know, all of us that grew up in the termination era, after the bill happened and it was imposed on us at Siletz, we always considered ourselves Indians and Siletz Indians but I just never really thought about it in those terms, probably as a teenager. I was 20 years old when restoration was achieved. So, there was a period of time where the legal status was probably understood by me but there isn't an exact date.

**Jessica Douglas** 41:43

What was that process of being restored? How did that happen? And what kind of conversations or community gathering had to happen in order for that process to work?

**Bud Lane** 42:02

Well, those councils, the pre-restoration councils, they did a tremendous amount of work. And not just in Siletz. They worked up and down the I-5 corridor where a lot of tribal members had moved. So they were in contact with a big majority of our people. And just working towards that goal, and with others, with churches, with other tribes like Warm Springs and Yakama [Nation], they supported us and our restoration. So, it was a huge effort. Ed's being a little bit shy about the work that he and others did. It was a huge thing to accomplish. I don't know if the numbers

are still the same, but they say one in 10,000 bills become law out of Congress. It used to be that way. So, the odds were huge. Think about a law that just turns a whole failed policy of the U.S. government on its head, I mean, to me it was just miraculous. It was a huge feat and a lot of work by those councils and we owe them a debt that we could never really repay them.

**Jessica Douglas** 43:24

Definitely, because as the second tribe [to be restored], there wasn't like a blueprint for how to be restored. It was still kind of in the works of everybody coming together. When you joined tribal council, what year was that? And, how far had the tribe come since restoration, and what were some of the priorities of that time?

**Bud Lane** 43:50

Well, longstanding health and education were the main things that we were working on but it was multifaceted, even though there were top priorities. So, the restoration bill called for a reservation bill within two years. Tribal council was, and this was before I was on it, working feverishly to get that completed, get a constitution passed and accepted by the membership, get an accurate roll setup. So, restoration in itself, all of this work that went into this, a tremendous amount of work, and the accomplishment itself was one thing but it's the beginning. It was not an end in itself, it was just a beginning of a tremendous amount of work that had to happen subsequent to that.

So, the tribes set about doing all of those things on different levels. And it was something that had, of course, there was no one to look at to say, here's a landless tribe that has been restored. We went about getting back some of our reservation land and then having the Bureau [of Indian Affairs] assist us and assist us also with programs to alleviate a lot of the poverty and things that have been caused by termination and kind of unfulfilled federal policies at the time.

**Jessica Douglas** 45:17

Can you speak a little bit more about how the tribe did get land back?

**Bud Lane** 45:23

Well, it was called for in a reservation bill that was subsequent to the restoration act itself. Early on, it was talked about as a 50,000-acre reservation and then in different acreages. It ended up being 3,600 acres. Mind you, our original reservation was 1.1 million acres, which was ceded in a series of eight treaties, seven of them Senate-ratified which led to the creation of the Siletz Reservation, our 1.1 million-acre reservation.

We were glad to get a [land] base back, don't get me wrong. It was really crucial and it helped us greatly at the time but you have to remember there were a lot of animosities going on at the time. It was during the Bolt Decision, during the salmon wars that were happening here in the Northwest, so it was a very volatile time. Our tribal councils worked through all that and ultimately were successful in getting Congress to pass a bill that turned back over that acreage to us.

**Jessica Douglas 46:34**

Nice. I'm realizing there might be some people on this call that aren't aware of where Siletz ancestral areas and homelands are and what that original reservation was. Would you be able to explain where those boundaries are and then where we are today as a reservation?

**Bud Lane 48:56**

Sure, that's what I do. If you think about Western Oregon, the summit of the Cascade Mountains west to the Pacific Ocean and from the Columbia River South to the Oregon-California border, that's Western Oregon. [The land] was divvied up amongst eight treaties, all of those lands were all ceded under a series of eight treaties for the Siletz reservation, which was a 1.1 million acre stretch on the coast that's approximately 20 miles wide and 100 miles long. It went from Cape Lookout near Tillamook on the northern end and south to just below the Siuslaw River to a small stream called the Siltcoos River and it was 20 miles wide. So, it was 100 miles of the Oregon Coast, one of the largest and most beautiful reservations in history, actually, in my opinion.

**Jessica Douglas 47:55**

I just got a little note, would you give a quick definition of the Bolt Decision<sup>1</sup>?

**Bud Lane 48:02**

It was about salmon fishing. So there was a court case going on and they decided that the tribes were entitled to 50% of the catch. It was very controversial at the time but well done by the courts. During that time, there was a lot of anti-Indian sentiment. That was what I was speaking of when I was saying that earlier about our restoration efforts and our reservation plan.

**Jessica Douglas 48:38**

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<sup>1</sup> The Boldt Decision was a historic ruling that affirmed the fishing rights of Washington state tribes in usual and accustomed places. The case *United States v Washington* was decided on February 12, 1974, by Federal District Judge George Boldt, and reaffirmed by the United States Supreme Court on July 2, 1979.]

You've done a lot of work to revive our cultural traditions as Siletz people. When and how did you become interested in those cultural traditions? And, how did that play a role in restoration efforts?

**Bud Lane** 48:52

Well, my participation culturally really came after the restoration effort. That was already an accomplished fact by the time I was involved, in my 20s. But Ed's family, the Bens and other families at Siletz, really deserve [acknowledgement] and to remember his dad and his family, they kept our dances alive, our basketry traditions. Other families, the Bensells, still kept those traditions alive. So, there were small pockets of this enduring culture going on because of the efforts of those peoples. We owe a huge debt to them because those things never really came to an end for us at Siletz in spite of termination. People decided [termination] doesn't matter, we're still going to practice our ways so that continuum was so important, and eventually led to my involvement and many others. No one could do anything by themselves. These things are much larger than any one person and I was just happy to be able to participate in some way.

**Jessica Douglas** 50:06

How has termination continued to impact hunting and fishing rights?

**Bud Lane** 50:16

That's an interesting question. Well, it did [impact hunting and fishing rights] because in an alleged legal sense, [termination] terminated those rights. It's a huge legal question for all of these types of things because we're a treaty tribe. As I mentioned earlier, there are seven ratified treaties [and] one unratified treaty that was forced on us, and they called for the creation of the reservation. Our people always exercised hunting and fishing rights in their ceded areas and then on the reservation when they came there. So those rights are associated with that land. As we begin to lose our land, it closed off a lot of areas to our people's access, as Ed mentioned earlier. So the thing is, those rights are inherent. They are sovereign rights that people possess and no ruling or anything can really dispossess you of those rights. They belong to your ancestors and they belong to you as a descendant.

People will sometimes say that Siletz is an executive order reservation. That's absolute nonsense. The treaties called for the creation or for the designation of the reservation by the President. And how does the President designate something? They use an executive order. So, the executive order was pursuant to the treaties: hence, a treaty reservation with hunting and fishing rights. As our reservation lands were slowly taken from us -- actually, [it didn't happen] slowly. The first chunk was taken in 1865, 10 years after the reservation was created. They took the Yaquina Strip, as we call it, which was 225,000 acres right out of the center of our reservation by executive order, illegally.

And then in 1875, on the northern and southern ends, there were other swaths taken. And then several other federal actions declared land surplus. It just kept whittling away in a systematic way and so our people suffered from the systematic government taking of things. Back then tribes didn't have resources. We didn't have attorneys. These decisions were made in Washington D.C. without one Siletz Indian in the room and imposed on us.

Our people continued to hunt and fish, well, they've always continued to hunt and fish. That's not changed. Those rights are inherent and they're based on being a tribe with a treaty. When you think about it, when tribes are restored, the slate isn't completely wiped clean, because there was this tribe that had this organization and structure that existed before the [federal] government decided they weren't going to hold your lands in trust anymore. And that's really what the termination act said was, they were no longer going to hold our lands in trust for us. It doesn't say anything about doing away with a treaty. It doesn't.

If you extrapolate it out and think about it, if you're the treaty tribe that has treaties, the [treaties are] what ceded the land to the United States. We signed the treaties four years prior to Oregon to becoming a state [in 1859], we didn't deal with the state at all, it was with the feds. That treaty is what gave up those rights to those lands. It's what ceded it to the United States. So, if those treaties aren't in effect anymore, as some people say, then who has title to that land? That land actually belongs back to the tribes if it's not been ceded in a treaty.

They need to think about what they're saying when they talk about us in those terms. It's from being a terminated tribe is why we're always put in that position. The actual thing is, we're not asking for anything extra or anything that's overboard. What we're asking for is to be treated equally with other tribes. That's all. Just treat us equally. Just because we're restored, do not treat us in a different way than you would treat other tribes because we suffered more than other peoples through bad federal policies is not a reason to do that.

**Jessica Douglas 54:52**

The tribe has now been restored for nearly 45 years. Can you describe what it's been like to witness the tribe from 1977 to now, in 2022? Where have you seen the most growth? What have you seen as big accomplishments? What has that been like?

**Bud Lane 55:22**

Well, I mentioned the reservation plan, that's huge. We've been able to send many young people to school on a higher education to improve their lives, whether they come back to work for us or they go out into the private sector. We've been able to work on keeping our traditions alive which is vital. Our identity is, of course, vital to any Indian tribe and our cultural programs are able to do that and assist tribal members.

Our Chinook Winds Casino Resort is a huge economic engine for us. It's been very successful and a lot of hard work went in to developing that for the people, for the tribes. There are just so many things that have happened -- acts of Congress that we've had done, like getting 100-year leasing or federal re-recognition of our original reservation boundary for fee to trust acquisitions that is treated as on-reservation. So, there's all this litany of huge things that have happened. I've played a role in some of them and I've sat back and applauded when others have done the work.

It's just been phenomenal to see the growth. And the other thing that we do at Siletz is, we are a self-governance tribe. We compact or contract with the federal government for BIA dollars and we hire all of our own people and run our own programs. It's the same way with the IHS, the Indian Health Service. We run our own health programs and have a state-of-the-art clinic at Siletz that's done so much for our people. The health, just the health things that we put together alone are huge for our membership. Having a healthy membership and youth coming up are such an important and vital thing and being able to take care of our elders. It's really been something to see.

**Jessica Douglas 57:34**

Definitely. Is there anything you want to say that I didn't ask you about termination and restoration that you want to leave our visitors with?

**Bud Lane 57:51**

Well, I guess I'd like to say, in spite of all the obstacles that have been presented to many generations of Siletz people, we've always persevered and we have made it through all of these tough times -- through termination, through all of the bad federal policies that reduced our reservation. Our people are survivors. They survived the marches here [from southern Oregon]. They survived the Rogue River Indian wars in southern Oregon. Some of our people had to swim every river coming up the coast to the reservation [during the marches]. And through it all, our people have survived and even prospered at times.

We had a new beginning with restoration. In some ways, it changed the way we think about the federal government and its responsibilities to us. We still hold them as our trustee and they are responsible for us but we are people who want to be in charge of our own future. We want to manage our own destiny and that's what we do. I'm really proud of our tribal government and our people on their march forward, and the future is bright for our people. We look forward to the future. It probably is a time in Siletz history where that hasn't been so since reservation times, but it is so today. Anyway, I just appreciate being able to be here with you today.

**Jessica Douglas 50:30**

We appreciate having you and hearing from you. Thank you so much. And thank you to Ed, too. At this point, Lisa, do we want to get close to wrapping up?

**Lisa Watt 59:44**

Yes, we want to turn back to the slide presentation quickly, slides 21 and 22. Since termination, many tribes like the Confederated Tribes of Siletz have led courageous efforts to reverse the damage caused. In these two slides, you will see about 50 tribes that were terminated and restored. There are still a number of tribes that have never been restored and a number of tribes that are continuing to seek restoration or federal recognition.

Let's turn to the questions. We have a few right now. We've had several questions about sharing our Call to Action [for Indigenous Communities] in lieu of our land acknowledgement that we presented at the beginning of the presentation. I'll mention that we are more than happy to share that statement. In fact, we'll be posting a blog shortly that talks about it and why Ecotrust has avoided land acknowledgements. So that will be coming up in the next, hopefully, next couple of weeks.

Bud, here's a question for you. Could you give us a description of the Siletz reservation again, both the historic one and the contemporary one? And then also, could you please clarify, at restoration, did the tribe have land? Did the tribe have land then or get land as a result of restoration?

**Bud Lane 1:01:47**

No, not as a result of the restoration bill. There was a subsequent reservation act that happened. Also, there were the 39 acres of what we call the Government Hill that was returned to us, I think right around that same time, if I remember correctly. But no, restoration did not bring any land. We had no land at that time. And what was the other part of the question?

**Lisa Watt 1:02:10**

It was just a brief description of the historic reservation and where it is today.

**Bud Lane 1:02:20**

The farthest point north was Cape Lookout which is a promontory point just south of the town of Tillamook. It ran all the way down the Oregon Coast to just passed Florence below the Siuslaw River to a creek known as Siltcoos River. It's not really a big river, it's a small waterway the. So those are the north-south boundaries. Then it went approximately 20 miles east and west. So, it was approximately 100 miles of the Oregon Coast. That was the original Siletz reservation. Now, what we have today and what we got back are much more scattered

parcels. There was 3,600 acres of land that we acquired subsequent to that but they're scattered in very small parcels, most of them within Lincoln County.

**Lisa Watt** 1:03:30

Thank you. Another question is, other than go to law school and keep fighting, do you have any advice for other terminated tribes fighting for recognition?

**Bud Lane** 1:03:40

All I can say is, you have to stand up for yourself. There's nothing that substitutes for that. The determination of [the people on whose] shoulders I stand on refused to accept that termination was going to be the end of the Siletz Tribes. So, it's about will and determination and having love for your people and your way of life.

Getting something through Congress is not easy. The Siletz Tribes had a champion in Mark Hatfield, the former senator from [Oregon]. We're experienced with that, we know it's difficult. There were a few bills that were introduced that didn't make it that were part of the restoration effort. We finally got one through and the president at the time was Jimmy Carter. I'm dating myself now. All I can say is it's perseverance and hard work. They never stopped and they got us over the goal line with our restoration act.

**Jessica Douglas** 1:04:52

The next question is, what do you see as the next priorities or challenges for the Siletz Tribes?

**Bud Lane** 1:05:02

We have many priorities going on right now. We have some economic development happening in Salem that we would like to see go through. We're continually looking at ways to expand our land base. Those efforts are happening and just continuing with our main priorities about improving the health, education, and welfare of our people. Those things never go away. They always need our continued work and attention. Like any government, we provide those services. It's just a continuum of work going forward.

**Lisa Watt** 1:05:54

Thank you, Bud. Has Siletz worked with local land trusts to regain tribal land?

**Bud Lane** 1:06:08

No. As a matter of fact, we've talked about it and we've talked with different people. But no, we have not really worked with land trusts yet. I've actually been invited to talk with a few of the folks that are interested in tribes hooking up and kind of gaining back some of their reservation lands or ceded lands that way. But no, we haven't to date.



**Jessica Douglas** 1:06:41

This may be a similar question. Is there a formal process for returning land back to the Siletz Tribes? Where could someone find more information about this process? And, is the acquisition of additional land a priority for us as a tribe?

**Bud Lane** 1:07:05

I would say it's always been a priority. We would have a much larger land base if we could have gotten Congress to restore more of our original reservation. Tribes need lands for us to survive in our traditional ways. We use them for hunting, fishing, and gathering. There isn't an actual formal [process]. Some people have deeded over their lands to us or set up a mechanism where, at their passing, their land will revert to us. So, there isn't an actual form you fill out or anything but you can certainly contact the tribal office if anybody's interested in donating former reservation land of the tribes. We're always happy to be able to secure land and to make it into reservation land again. It's one of our goals and priorities.

**Lisa Watt** 1:08:05

We have a question from our friend Dave Tovey. One of the things I recall from Siletz and other Oregon tribes' restoration was that the hunting and fishing organizations were politically strong that seemed to affect those rights at restoration. Is the atmosphere better to restore those rights?

**Bud Lane** 1:08:28

I'd say the atmosphere is better. And Dave Tovey is an old friend of mine, it's good to hear from you. But yes, I would say so, the atmosphere is more conducive today. Like I said, during those years, when we were negotiating with the state over these issues, it was around the Bolt Decision and it was a really hotly contested thing and not favorable to tribes at the time.

**Lisa Watt** 1:09:02

Thank you, Dave, for the question. Why don't you take this question, Jess?

**Jessica Douglas** 1:09:24

What mental health impacts have there been upon today's youth and families about restoration, examples of resilience or PTSD? What would you ask of the audience about how they can right the wrongs of past atrocities to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz? Can they support tribal enterprises, education, etc.?

**Bud Lane** 1:09:46

The one thing that people could do is support our Siletz Tribal Arts & Heritage Society which is actively creating a cultural center [in Siletz]. A lot of us believe, and I believe it's true, that we

heal through culture and keeping our songs, dances, basketry, and all of those types of things alive are good for our people.

**Jessica Douglas** 1:10:22

The first part [of the question] was, what mental health impacts have there been upon today's youth and families around restoration? Examples of resilience and PTSD?

**Bud Lane** 1:10:35

I talked a little bit about the resilience before. Of course, restoration is going to lift anybody up that has been involved in it or affected by it, because with restoration came alleviation of a lot of the things that had been talked about, the health and mental well-being of our people, maybe even where there's alcohol or drug dependencies, those types of things or just general health in that way. So, it's given us the tools to take care of our people and help them heal. Not just in a physical way but also in a mental way that's good for them. So yes, it's had a definite big impact on being able to do that for our people.

**Lisa Watt** 1:11:33

Bud, this is the last question. We have quite a few people who registered for this series that come from nonprofit organizations and other organizations that are interested in working with tribes. What advice would you give to these groups and people about the best way to develop relationships with tribes? I don't want to say the 'easiest' way to develop a relationship for mutually beneficial work because it's not easy work. It's a process, it takes time. Can you give some advice about how to connect or the best ways to work with tribes today?

**Bud Lane** 1:12:30

I think the first step is to get to know us. A lot of people make assumptions about tribes, that they're monolithic, that we all have the exact same interests. We don't, actually. There are themes that all tribes share but each tribe is unique to its own situation and so I would say, for people that want to work with tribes and get to know tribes, you need to come out and meet us. Share a meal with us. We host all kinds of different groups that want to come out and get to know us, even groups from foreign countries.

Our general thing is to tell them about ourselves, about our traditions. We want people to learn our history a little bit about how we've been impacted by policies of the past, what we've done to alleviate those policies going into the future, and a little bit about our culture. So, you really can't assist somebody without learning about them, learning about their experiences and, really, if you can help. So I would say, doing those things are probably the best way to get to know us.

**Lisa Watt** 1:13:40

Thank you very much, Bud. That brings us to a close to this part of the program. Before we do close, we'd like to offer a few more remarks.

**Jessica Douglas 1:13:58**

As Bud mentioned, if you'd like to support some of the ongoing work of the Siletz Tribes, please consider donating and supporting to the Siletz Tribal Arts & Heritage Society, which is in the process of planning a new cultural center in the Siletz community. We'll post that link in the chat. And please help spread the word about this project.

You can also support the Northwest Native American Basketweavers Association as they work to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the traditional art of Northwest Native American basketry. We'll share their link in the chat as well.

Additionally, we would appreciate your feedback about this briefing. If you're able to do so, a five-minute survey will be sent to you immediately following this gathering. Please take a moment to complete it. If you provided feedback last time, we'd love for you to complete it as well. Thank you. We'll put that in the chat as well.

If you'd like to follow some of the work that we're doing here at Ecotrust with Native communities, please consider subscribing to our bi-weekly newsletter. Last Friday, we shared the first of a three part interview series about the impacts of climate change on trees and plants important to tribes. The series elevates Indigenous voices around a critical issue to tribes. Our first interview was with our dear friend Mike Durglo of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Montana and the tribes' restoration work around the whitebark pine. You'll also want to stay up-to-date as we have the upcoming 2022 ILA awards in May.

And then, finally, our third briefing in the series will be on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, entitled *The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act: Impacts on Alaska Native Communities*. In all of Native American affairs in the U.S., the relationship between Alaska Native communities and the federal government is one of one of the least understood by outsiders. The passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 created a unique structure and relationship distinct from the reservation system of the lower 48. Join us in welcoming to Native leaders of Alaska, Joe Nelson and Nicole Borromeo.

**Lisa Watt 1:16:30**

Thank you again everyone. We hope you are walking away with some new understandings and insights into Indigenous leadership and the future of tribal nations in the Pacific Northwest. We hope to see you all on February 16th at 11am. Be safe, everyone. Thank you.

<end>

## CITATIONS:

Ben, Ed, *Termination: The Attempt to Destroy and the Rebuilding of the Siletz Tribes* for the Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands webinar series. Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program, January 19, 2022.

<https://vimeo.com/668682840>

Lane, Alfred (Bud), *Termination: The Attempt to Destroy and the Rebuilding of the Siletz Tribes* for the Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands webinar series. Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program, January 19, 2022.

<https://vimeo.com/668682840>

Ecotrust Indigenous Leadership Program webinar series, *Indigenous Leadership: Ensuring a Future for Native Peoples, Cultures, and Lands*. Monthly starting December 15, 2021 through March, 16, 2022. <https://vimeo.com/668682840>