
(3) Technical Assistance Letter(s)

- March 18, 1982
- November 1, 1988

Mr. Donald E. Mechals
Chinook Indian Tribe, Inc.
P.O. Box 228
Chinook, Washington 98614

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March 1 1982

Dear Mr. Mechals:

The Branch of Federal Acknowledgment has initially reviewed the Chinook Indian Tribe's petition for Federal acknowledgment for obvious deficiencies and significant omissions, as required by the acknowledgment regulations, 25 CFR 54.9 (b). The petition is in general well-written and thoroughly documented. There are, however, several areas where additional information or documentation is important to assist our consideration of the petition.

We are enclosing a list of individuals, taken from the membership list submitted with the petition, for whom ancestry and or individual history charts are needed. The membership list itself should include all persons who are currently considered to be members of the Chinook Indian Tribe, Inc. If the group is acknowledged, the list submitted with the petition could well become the group's base roll for some time to come. For each person on the list, we will need their full name (including maiden name for married women), address of current residence, and date of birth.

We would also appreciate a clarification of your membership criteria. Page 138, which covers the charts submitted in the petition, makes reference to tracing to the "annuity roll of 1915." We assume that this refers to the 1914 "McChesney" roll, submitted as exhibit 169. What relationship does this qualification bear to the membership criteria described in the group's governing document? Please note that this is a request for a clarification and is not intended to challenge the group's method of determining membership.

The description of the social organization of the Chinook tribe from the treaty period until the 1890's would be greatly enhanced if more detail could be provided for that period concerning the leadership and political processes within the group. If there were specific group leaders up to the adoption of a written governing document in 1953, we would appreciate a list of these as well. The description of political processes need not be limited to discussion of particular leaders but may, as the petition narrative has done, include less formalized processes such as group meetings and actions.

We would also appreciate a clarification of the historical bands from which the current Chinook Indian Tribe is descended. At several points the petition text identifies the current group with the "Lower Chinook." Elsewhere the petition states the Wahkiakum band is a predecessor, and the past and present governing documents have membership criteria based on descent not only from Lower Chinook but from Wahkiakum, Kathlamet, Willapa and Clatsop groups, which except for Willapa would be outside "Lower Chinook" as the petition defines the term. Wahkiakum, according to the petition, is an Upper Chinookan group. In this connection we would also appreciate knowing what the relationship is between the current Chinook Tribe, Incorporated and

the "Wahkiakum Band of Chinook Indians" which is currently engaged in litigation over treaty fishing rights. In addition, since the petition indicated the Chinook Tribe, ~~Wahkiakum~~ ^{Enc.} is to some degree involved in these cases, we would appreciate knowing whether it considers itself to be a party to this litigation.

There are some additional materials and questions, listed below, which will aid us greatly in understanding the history and current character of the group. They do not reflect serious deficiencies in the petition but would be helpful in processing it when it comes under active consideration.

1. Is there additional documentation or information available concerning the role of the Chinooks in the Shaker Church and the Northwest Federation of Indians? Such materials would help to strengthen the history.
2. What is the relationship between the Chinook Indian Tribe and the Chinook Nation? We note that organizational documents and other materials have been submitted for both organizations.
3. Please provide a list of council members since 1970, a description of committees the group currently has, and a list of those who have served on these committees for the past five years.
4. Please provide copies of any grants to the group that have been received or applied for in the past five years.
5. Please provide samples of tribal minutes or accounts of annual meetings between 1960 and 1970.

We would like to note that exhibits 149, 155 and 170, and the last two items listed for exhibit 139, were not received with the petition. We would appreciate receiving copies of these, except for exhibit 170, which we anticipate will be available to us in the archives here in Washington. We would also appreciate having a more legible copy of exhibit 140, if one is available to you.

The Acknowledgment staff will be in touch with you by telephone to discuss the specific materials needed to reinforce the petition. We look forward to working with you toward the completion of work on this petition. In the meantime, if you have questions, please call Acknowledgment staff on (703) 235-2360 or write to the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20245, Attention: Branch of Federal Acknowledgment.

Sincerely,

Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

Enclosure