

Dear Editor,

A letter in your last issue provides a first-hand look at how the BIA 2001 recognition of the Chinook Indian Nation (CIN)—because it included a provision forbidding extension of federally-funded services to the 3% of the CIN membership that derived exclusively from the Clatsop Tribe—caused hardship within CIN.

This problem had an obvious cure. Ask the US Congress to undo Clatsop's status as a terminated Tribe. Success would have looked almost certain for the recently restored CIN in 2001.

This picture changed when the BIA rescinded its recognition of CIN.

Imagine if the US government, when the Confederated Tribes of Siletz (CTSI) was restored @ 1976, had also determined that 3% of us—say those who descend exclusively from Joshua ancestors—could not receive federally-funded services. And next imagine the US government rescinding its recognition of CTSI 18 months later. And then also imagine an internal split with, let's say, the "Joshua-Yurok" Tribe forming to pursue separate federal recognition.

More than a single disaster—this was an earthquake compounded by a tsunami.

About a decade post disaster, the letter's author, Dick Basch, was invited—along with other Clatsop-Nehalem leaders—by Siletz officials to enroll at Siletz immediately after Siletz Tribal Council declined to support their federal recognition. In 2018, Basch did so, with a Siletz tribal attorney classifying the event in US District Court as a "test-case" enrollment.

Why this sudden change in Siletz enrollment practices?

The answer is because some Siletz officials were wishing to falsely lay claim to Clatsop land/wealth/identity. They've been busy. Their efforts include promoting a distorted history erasing the real history of many Siletz families.

Let's remember: Prior to 2018, all persons enrolled at Siletz with Clatsop ancestors were akin to the many Siletz individuals with Lakota or Apache ancestors. These ancestors—like my grandfather Robert N. Service, Sr.—married a Siletz tribal member and started a family. My grandfather specifically, who married a Siletz'er @ 1920, never enrolled at Siletz because he was thought to be "too much Clatsop."\* This very same reason forced my Siletz grandmother, Ada Carson Service, to petition Siletz officials in the 1920s before her children enrolled. Shockingly, some Siletz officials have now claimed our grandfather as a "Siletz ancestor."

I fully support the restoration of federal recognition of the CIN in its entirety (Clatsop, Lower Chinook, Willapa, Wahkiakum, and Kathlamet Tribes), in part, because it'll allow the Clatsop Tribe to finally be "un-terminated." It'll also "de-incentivize" further attempts to falsely represent our Siletz family history.

Drew Viles

\* Basch has provided me with clarification of his letter published last month: When the late Joe Scovell's application for **Siletz** enrollment was rejected in the 1980s, **Siletz** enrollment officials stated that he was "too much Clatsop" while apparently discounting his Tillamook/Nehalem ancestry.