Connecting Food, Culture, Identity, and Histories

In Task 2-3, the team began analyzing the survey results to learn more about how some people think about food and nutrition in the community. However, survey results alone may not always provide all the information a person might need to understand why people think in different ways. The underlying reasons that influence someone’s thoughts and decisions may be connected to aspects of local culture, identity, and history.

When defining any food-based issue, it is important to understand the relationship a community has with food, culture, identities, and histories in that place. In this task, the team will research and explore connections between food, culture, identity, and histories within the Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest. The team will use this analysis in preparation to then conduct research on possible connections within your local research site in Task 2-5.

Objective

In this task, the team will be focusing on the following question from the question map in Task 1-10: What are the connections between culture, identities, histories, and food in a community?

1. Go to the Task 2-4 folder and get the materials and instructions to complete the Native Knowledge 360° Why Do the Foods We Eat Matter activity 1, Food Is More Than Just What You Eat.

2. After completing the activity, discuss:
   - How can foods be more than just what we eat?
   - How can foods be used to express culture?
   - How can foods be used to form both individual and collective identity, for example on your research team?

AT THE SMITHSONIAN

This activity about Native American food and culture can be found here: https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pnw-history-culture/
3. Go to the Task 2-4 folder and get the materials and instructions to complete the Native Knowledge 360° activity Why Do the Foods We Eat Matter activity 2, Why Is Salmon Important to Native People and Nations?

4. After completing the activity, discuss:
   • What might happen to people, cultures, and communities if the foods that define them cease to exist?
   • What are some possible foods that may help define culture, identities, or histories of people in your community?
   • How can understanding connections between food, culture, identities, and histories be useful when thinking about the problem question, How do we ensure good nutrition for all?

If you want to learn more about transforming teaching and leaning about Native Americans please visit: https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360

Hooray! You completed Task 2-4. Check it off the task list. Go to Task 2-5!
Teacher Materials

Staging the Question:
Food Is More than Just What We Eat

Featured Sources
- **Video: Foods and Cultures**—Watch this video and think about connections between foods and cultures.
- **Map: Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest**—Examine the map to see the many Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest, the abundance of waterways, and how natural features of landscape impact how we live.
- **Optional Extension Essay:** “Essential Connections Between Food and Culture”—Hear from the expert. Read what educator and writer, Shana Brown (Yakama Nation) has to say about why foods are more than just what we eat.

Student Tasks
- **Food Is More Than Just What We Eat**

Student Outcomes

**KNOW**
Native Nations recognize as their homelands three distinct regions of the Pacific Northwest: Pacific Coast, Puget Sound, and Columbia River/Plateau. Native Peoples of the Pacific Northwest identify as “Salmon People” because salmon play a central role in their identities and cultures.

**UNDERSTAND**
Salmon is not just a critical food source for Native Peoples of the Pacific Northwest, but also reflects their histories and cultures. Organized actions on the part of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest show agency and ensure cultural survival.

**DO**
Make inferences about how threats to a food source might impact Native cultures and communities of the Pacific Northwest.
Standards
[C3 Dimension Standards]
D2.Geo.6.9-12. Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.

[CCSS: 9-12 Grade Specific Standards]
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

[CCSS: Corresponding Anchor Standards]
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
Staging the Question Lesson Procedures

Anticipatory Set
Part A—Making Connections
- Ask students: What are your favorite foods? Why? Are there foods that you associate with particular holidays, memories, celebrations, or events? What is the significance of these foods?
- Show the video *Foods and Cultures*. After watching the video, students can make connections about the importance of certain foods to their own cultures by using the graphic organizer on Part A of the student worksheet *Food Is More Than Just What We Eat*.

Guided Practice, Instruction, and Formative Assessment
Part B—Making Inferences
- Direct students to the online interactive map, *Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest*. Call attention to the many Native Nations, the abundance of waterways, and the three regions identified on the map: Pacific Coast, Puget Sound, and Columbia River/Plateau. Ask students to predict how physical features impact the ways people live.
- Many cultures have close connections with foods. Ask students to imagine the impact on cultures if they were no longer able to access important cultural foods.
- Students complete Part B on the *Food Is More Than Just What We Eat* worksheet after exploring the interactive map, *Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest* and watching the video *Foods and Cultures*. With each stated fact, students should cite the source of each fact (map or video) and make three inferences—one for each fact—about how threats to salmon might impact cultures and communities of the Pacific Northwest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Native Nations recognize regions of the Pacific Northwest as their ancestral homelands.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native communities of the Pacific Northwest have fished for generations.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon play an important role in the cultural identity of Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>If salmon are threatened it could impact how people are able to express their cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher TIP: As needed, guide students in developing inferences. Remind students that inferences are informed evidence-based assumptions.
Check for Understanding

- How can foods be more than just what we eat? Discuss with students the importance of foods to how we express our cultures and form both individual and collective identity.

Preview

- Next, students will examine region case studies to learn more about why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest.
- Introduce the inquiry and compelling question: *Why do the foods we eat matter?* Prompt students to brainstorm what the topic of the inquiry might be.
Staging the Question:
Food Is More than Just What We Eat

Part A—Making Connections
Directions: Foods are a lot more than just what we eat. After watching the video *Foods and Cultures*, draft a short paragraph making connections between the foods you eat and your own culture. See example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Food</th>
<th>Cultural Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td>Example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon</td>
<td>Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest each have unique and diverse cultures, but they all share a connection to salmon. During events such as the Canoe Journey and Potlaches, Native communities pass down histories and traditions that their people have shared for thousands of years. Traditions such as fishing and sharing food at cultural events and gatherings help Native people strengthen connections with their past. Salmon plays an important role in these traditions and in the histories and cultures of Native People whose homelands extend throughout the Pacific Northwest.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Part B—Making Inferences**

**Directions:** Many cultures have close connections with foods. Imagine the impact on cultures if communities are no longer able to access important foods. After watching the video *Foods and Cultures* and analyzing the map, *Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest*, complete the activity in the chart below. First, determine the source of each fact in the left-hand column. Next, circle the source, **MAP** or **VIDEO**, in the center column. Finally, make inferences about how threats to salmon might impact cultures and communities of the Pacific Northwest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many Native Nations recognize regions of the Pacific Northwest as their ancestral homelands.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>MAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native communities of the Pacific Northwest have fished for generations.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>MAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon play an important role in the cultural identities of Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest.</td>
<td>MAP</td>
<td>MAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
<td>VIDEO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pacific Northwest Native Nations, ©Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of the American Indian

Locations and names of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest today.
Abundant rain and snowfall provide water for the Pacific Northwest. Major waterways sustain life for plants, animals, fish, and people.
We have not always gotten our foods from grocery stores or restaurants. Nor have we always been accustomed to eating out-of-season or imported exotic foods. Before shipping, plastic wrap, and packaged meats, we ate what our local environments provided. And we built our worlds accordingly.

The food practices of the Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest do not just reflect their identities; they define their identities. Who we are as a people is reflected in our relationship with the environment, the foods that environment provides, and the individual and collective responsibilities undertaken to care for natural resources. Natural resources are not simply viewed by Native people as commodities to be bought and sold; instead, they are viewed as relatives to be cherished and cared for. Culturally important foods, such as salmon and other fish, reflect the unique histories and experiences of Native peoples, especially the histories and experiences that are connected to landscapes and water.

Because our lives and identities are so intertwined with salmon, many Native peoples in the Pacific Northwest call themselves the Salmon People. From the late eighteenth-century on, European and American arrivals in the Pacific Northwest made it increasingly difficult for our ancestors to maintain their food practices, especially once non-Native diets became so prevalent. The influx of non-Native settlers in the Pacific Northwest, thus, threatened our very identity as Salmon People. Over time, the activities of non-Indian settlers brought about commercial fishing, pollution, habitat loss, hydroelectric dams, and other factors that had a very negative impact on the salmon population and the environment as a whole. Instead of respectfully using and managing existing resources, the newcomers altered the landscape and
depleted resources. They also denied Indians access to millennia-old hunting, fishing, and gathering sites.

Despite these challenges, tribal nations have been able to maintain their traditional food practices to varying degrees of success. Today, we see a renewed resurgence of and respect for traditional Native food practices. This resurgence not only complements the survival of tribal peoples, their collective identities, and their sovereignty, but it also supports the changing viewpoints of non-Indian people, who now more frequently accept the essential and sustainable value in the very food practices they once sought to eliminate altogether.

A number of contemporary practices and events reflect and strengthen the revival of traditional indigenous food practices. One such event, the annual Canoe Journey along the Pacific coastline of Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington, illustrates the renaissance our nations are experiencing. Once a year, canoes filled with indigenous peoples from all over the world converge on the Pacific Northwest. Native Nations here host these events, and share their stories, songs, foods, and food practices with everyone who has gathered for the occasion. Indigenous participants and canoe families exchange cultural protocols to demonstrate the mutual respect for "homelands" among the gathered people, and particularly for the homelands of the people being visited. Inaugurated by Native leaders in 1989, the annual Canoe Journey event was developed to help tribal youth strengthen their connections with their past and present cultures and environments and, by doing so, strengthen personal identities for the future.

Through the activities and resources of this lesson, you will witness the incredible resiliency and innovation of the Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest in their efforts to protect and cultivate healthy relationships with their relatives—salmon, water, and homelands. And, you will see how foods can define not only who we are, but also who we wish to be.
Supporting Question One: Why Is Salmon Important to Native People and Nations of the Pacific Northwest?

Featured Sources
- **Source Set A:** Pacific Coast Region Case Study—Examine images, objects, and quotes to determine why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Pacific Coast.
- **Source Set B:** Puget Sound Region Case Study—Examine images, objects, and quotes to determine why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Puget Sound.
- **Source Set C:** Columbia River/Plateau Case Study—Examine images, objects, and quotes to determine why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Columbia River/Plateau.

Student Tasks
- **Resource Annotator Example**—This supporting question includes an interactive resource annotator. Students use the annotator tool to mark up each source and caption. They can use up to five pins for each source to make notes about the themes: identity, culture, and community.
- **Why Is Salmon Important?**

Student Outcomes

**KNOW:**
Identities, cultures, and communities of Native Peoples of the Pacific Northwest are closely tied to salmon. Traditional practices of fishing and preparing salmon impact collective and individual identities and the health and vitality of Native Nations and their cultures.

**UNDERSTAND**
Salmon is not just a critical food source for Native Peoples of the Pacific Northwest, but also reflects their histories and cultures. Organized actions on the part of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest show agency and ensure cultural survival.

**DO**
Construct evidence-based claims about the importance of salmon to Native Peoples and Nations of the Pacific Northwest by using an interactive resource annotator to analyze sources.
Standards
[C3 Dimension Standards]
D2.Geo.4.9-12. Analyze relationships and interactions within and between human and physical systems to explain reciprocal influences that occur among them.
D2.His.13.9-12. Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

[CCSS: 9-12 Grade Specific Standards]
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.8: Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the specific task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

[CCSS: Corresponding Anchor Standards]
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
Supporting Question One Lesson Procedures

Anticipatory Set
- Have students brainstorm potential definitions for the following concepts: identities, cultures, and communities. Invite students to share their ideas and discuss. Present the following explanations for each concept:
  - **Identity**: The qualities and beliefs of an individual
  - **Culture**: Shared beliefs, traditions, and practices of a group
  - **Community**: A feeling of wanting to be with other people or of caring about the other people in a group
- Explain that students will examine these themes as they apply to the importance of salmon to Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest.

Review
- Help students recall key ideas explored in the previous lesson: Many Native Nations call the Pacific Northwest home, and for these nations, salmon is an important food source and expression of identity and culture.

Guided Practice, Instruction, and Formative Assessment
*Teacher TIP*: Students can print or download and save their annotations. Before students begin their case study analysis, consider modeling how to interpret the three different types of sources that students will encounter: images, quotations, and objects. Preview the interactive **Resource Annotator Example** with students. The interactive requires students to select a source and then students can drag and drop themed pins (identity, culture, and community) onto the source where they wish to add annotations.

**Part A—Case Study Analysis**
*Teacher TIP*: If you are having students analyze more than one case study, you will need to print multiple copies of Part A of the **Why Is Salmon Important?** worksheet, one for each case study.
- Students can work individually, with partners, or in groups to analyze the case studies. We recommend that students work in groups of three, with each student analyzing one region case study. First, students work independently, using the interactive **Resource Annotator Example** to identify themes: identity, culture, and community. Students examine and annotate each source, typing annotations that explain why the source relates to one or more themes.
- After annotating the sources students complete the graphic organizer on Part A of the **Why Is Salmon Important?** worksheet. First, students select two sources that best exemplify why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest and then they circle the type of source they selected (object, image, or quotation). Finally, students construct an argument-based claim and paraphrase or quote the evidence they cited in a way that supports their claim.

*Teacher TIP*: Remind students to think about the discussion questions that accompany each source. The discussion questions seek to elicit key ideas related to identity, culture, and community.
Part B—Crafting Evidence-Based Claims

- Working as a class, with partners, or in groups, students share out their answers from Part A of the Why Is Salmon Important? worksheet. They work together to refine their claims from Part A in the left-hand column and quote or paraphrase evidence in the right-hand column.

Teacher TIP: There are many reasons why salmon is important to Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest. However, it is important for students to use evidence from the sources to inform their understanding and make connections to the ideas of identity, culture, and community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is salmon important?</th>
<th>The evidence that supports this claim says...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Pacific Coast Nations because...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Puget Sound Nations because...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Columbia River/Plateau Nations because...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher TIP: This graphic organizer represents evidence and claims from all three case studies. Students will use these claims to synthesize a claim pertaining to supporting question one in Part C.

Check for Understanding

Part C—Constructing Claims

- After sharing and refining, each student will synthesize the three claims from Part B of the Why Is Salmon Important? worksheet in order to construct their own evidence-based claim. This claim will be placed in the first box in Part C of the Why Is Salmon Important? worksheet. Claims should address the supporting question: Why is salmon important to Native People and Nations of the Pacific Northwest? In the second box students cite the names of the sources that best support their claim, ideally one from each case study.

Preview

- As a closing discussion, invite students to share their conclusions and cite evidence from the sources they examined. As time allows, ask students to make a prediction about what might happen to people, cultures, and communities of the Pacific Northwest if salmon ceased to exist.
- In supporting question two students will consider how the depletion of salmon impacts the identities, cultures, and communities of Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest.
# Supporting Question One: Why Is Salmon Important to Native People and Nations of the Pacific Northwest?

## Part A—Case Study Analysis

**Directions:** After examining each source in your case study, select two sources that best explain why salmon is important to Native People and Nations. Complete the writing prompts below using evidence from your selected sources. Be ready to share your responses.

I studied the __________________________ region of the Pacific Northwest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source 1 (circle one)</th>
<th>object</th>
<th>image</th>
<th>quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After examining this source, I would argue that salmon is important to ________________ region of the Pacific Northwest because . . .

The evidence that supports this claim says . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source 2 (circle one)</th>
<th>object</th>
<th>image</th>
<th>quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After examining this source, I would argue that salmon is important to ________________ region of the Pacific Northwest because . . .

The evidence that supports this claim says . . .
### Part B—Crafting Evidence-Based Claims

**Directions:** First, share out claims drafted Part A. Then, together with your peers, refine your claims. Use the left-hand column in the organizer below to explain why salmon is important for each region and the right-hand column to quote or paraphrase evidence from the sources in the case studies that supports each claim.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why is salmon important?</th>
<th>The evidence that supports this claim says. . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Pacific Coast Nations because. . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Puget Sound Nations because. . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon is important to Columbia River/Plateau Nations because. . .</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Part C—Constructing Claims

**Directions:** Construct a claim that addresses supporting question one: *Why is salmon important to Native Peoples and Nations of the Pacific Northwest?* Be sure cite the sources that best support your claim.

1. **Claim**

2. **Evidence**
Why is Salmon Important to Native People and Nations of the Pacific Northwest – Case Studies Introduction

Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest define themselves as Salmon People. They consider salmon to be an extremely important gift of food from the Creator, and each year they honor the salmon’s sacrifice in special ceremonies. There are many geographic regions that distinguish Native Nations or language groups from one another in the Pacific Northwest; three major geographic regions are presented here: the Pacific Coast, Puget Sound, and the Columbia River/Plateau. Despite physical distance and cultural diversity, salmon is a unifying factor for Native People and Nations across the Pacific Northwest.

Pacific Coast Region

Native People of the Pacific Coast region enjoy an abundance of sea life to help sustain their economies and diets. Through halibut and shellfish are the mainstay of many coastal nations, the most important species in their collective identities, cultures, and relationships with other nations continues to be salmon.

Puget Sound Region

The Puget Sound Region reaches from Canada to Washington State and includes the waterways and lands surrounding the Straits of Georgia and Juan de Fuca. It is sometimes referred to as the Salish Sea, in honor of the Native Peoples who have lived in the region for thousands of years. It is an intricate estuarine system carved by glaciers as recently as 10,000 years ago. This complex ecosystem is home to a vast array of marine life; shellfish; sea mammals; and fish – primarily salmon. Salmon is not only a foundation of Native Peoples’ diets, it is also linked to their cultures, communities, and identities.

Columbia River/Plateau Region

The Columbia River separates the states of Washington and Oregon and flows into the Pacific Ocean. Its watershed, however, reaches into Canada, Idaho, and Oregon. Until the early twentieth century, salmon migrated to all the upper reaches and tributaries of the watershed, providing nutrition and trade staples for Native peoples of the region.
“Salmon has always been essential to our life. We all had jobs to do and most of them centered around salmon. . . . [Salmon] provided everything they needed to live. . . . All their religion and food was salmon. It was the basis for everything.”

Michael Marchand (Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation), NMAI Interview, July 2016

Michael Marchand is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. He and his family have fished along the Columbia River for generations.
Celilo means “echo of water on rocks” in the Sahaptin language. At the falls, fish were so abundant that people said you could walk across the river on their backs. Many Native Nations, travelling from as far away as the Dakotas, Alaska, and Northern California, gathered at Celilo Falls to trade goods and fish.
Leonard Dave, of the Yakama Nation fishes on the Klickitat, a tributary of the Columbia River. The Klickitat, a tributary of the Columbia River, is one of the few places in Washington State where Yakama tribal members still fish for salmon with dip nets on platforms.

Photograph by Jonathan Modie, 2007, courtesy of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)
Tutuni (Confederated Tribes of Siletz) fish trap, 1900–1910. Siletz Reservation, Oregon. NMAI 047528

Set nets like this one were used to catch salmon. When salmon swim through the hoop, they are trapped in the net.
“We’ve been out on boats all our lives; my dad was a fisherman when he was young; . . . we grew up here on the water, we grew up on boats. It seemed like we were fishing everywhere we went. We’d always throw a hook in the water somewhere, whether it’s in a lake or along the river, or wherever we went.”

Brian Parker (Makah), NMAI Interview, July 2016

Brian Parker’s family has fished in the Pacific Ocean for generations. Salmon and other types of fishing define his identity as a Makah citizen and maintain the continuity of thousands of years of cultural traditions.

Makah Days in the mid-1950s. Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest use cedar skewers to pierce, roast, and smoke salmon filets over open pit fires.
Native peoples engineered a variety of tools and techniques to harvest salmon. The hook-and-line method reflects the sustainable practice of taking enough fish for a family or community while leaving healthy, sustainable amounts of fish to spawn and migrate.
A typical problem with certain kinds of modern nets is that they can be far too large and catch many non-commercial fish. This small Quileute set net, however, was made to target specific types and sizes of fish.
**Salmon grilling over a fire pit**, Neah Bay, Makah Indian Reservation, Washington, August 27, 2005. Photograph by Konrad Wothe, courtesy of Alamy Stock Photo

Salmon roasting at Makah Days, a period of celebration during which Makah citizens gather to honor thousands of years of customs and traditions as well as the anniversary of becoming United States citizens in 1924 under the American Indian Citizenship Act.
“My dad instilled in me how important the fish was. We spent many hours out on the water, and that is how I related to myself, as a strong person through fishing . . . I know that I’m the person that I am today because of fishing.”

Lisa Wilson Cook (Lummi), NMAI Interview, 2016

Lisa Wilson Cook is a water resources technician for the Lummi Nation and has a Bachelor of Science in Native Environmental Science. She reflects on reasons for which fishing is important to her identity.
Duwamish shovel-nose canoe, ca. 1880–1910. Cedar, iron nails, and copper. Canoe of square-end type, used on lakes and rivers. King County, Lake Sammamish. NMAI 097294

Shovel-nose canoes are flat bottomed and dug out or carved from a single tree. They are engineered for speed and agility in shallow waters. There is a growing trend among Native Nations of the Pacific Northwest to reestablish the making and use of shovel-nose canoes.
Roasting salmon over fire not only is delicious, but also reflects healthy, time-honored preparations of Native foods. Prior to the treaty times of the Pacific Northwest in the 1850s, Native foods did not include white flour or lard, two less healthy staples provided by the United States after treaties were ratified.
Shovel-nose canoe, 1921. Duwamish Indians. NMAI N07289

Shovel-nose canoes have been used for river fishing since time immemorial. The flat bottom allows for upriver navigation using poles. Fishers are able to sit at both the prow and stern.
Women cooking salmon, Muckleshoot Reservation, ca. 1950. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of History and Industry, Seattle

These women were preparing skewered salmon over a fire pit around 1950. This type of traditional preparation is free of the additional fats that pan-frying requires. Salmon was the staple of traditional diets of Pacific Northwest Native people; researchers estimate that even as late as the 1940s, annual consumption was over 320 pounds per person.