

Shelbi Madera

Candidate for Nooksack Tribal Council – Position B

Whatcom County, WA | Nooksack Traditional Territory



Education

Associates of Science

Northwest Indian College – Bellingham, WA

Graduated: 2018

Bachelor of Science in Native Environmental Science

Northwest Indian College – Bellingham, WA

Graduated: 2020

Professional Experience

Climate Resiliency Specialist

Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department — Bellingham, WA

2022 – Present

Environmental Health Officer

Inter-Tribal Environmental Health Program (serving four Tribal Nations)

2020 – 2024

Tribal and Community Leadership

President – Nooksack Tribe Education Recommendation Board

December 2024 – Present

Board Member – Nooksack Indian Tribe Housing Recommendation Board

2024 – Present

Treasurer – Student Executive Board, Northwest Indian College

2018

Candidate Statement – Shelbi Madera for Nooksack Tribal Council, Position B

I believe in restoring trust, unity, and true representation within the Nooksack Tribe. For too long, our people have endured stalled progress, lack of transparency, and decisions that do not reflect the needs of our community. It is time for selfless, determined leadership that listens to all members and takes action grounded in honesty, cultural values, and long-term vision.

As a lifelong resident of Whatcom County—our Nooksack Traditional Territory—I have witnessed many changes, both good and bad, that have impacted our Point Elliott Treaty Rights and our Nooksack Tribal Constitutional and Bylaw rights. Unfortunately, much of our progress has been held-back by internal politics, favoritism, and a lack of accountability. Our members have been left out, our programs underdeveloped, and our opportunities lost. I am running because I am tired of false promises and political favoritism. We deserve a council that works full-time, leads with integrity, and acts in the best interest of every tribal member—not just a select few.

I earned my **Bachelor's Degree in Native Environmental Science** from **Northwest Indian College**, where I learned the deep importance of our Treaty rights and the responsibility we carry to protect our lands, waters, and the life that sustains us.

As an **Environmental Health Officer** for four Tribes, I applied my environmental science background to human public health. I worked directly with tribal communities to assess facilities, recommend updates, and ensure safe and sanitary environments for employees, elders, and children. Today, I serve as a **Climate Resiliency Specialist** with the Lummi Nation Natural Resources Department, where I helped update the **Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan** and contributing to updating Lummi's **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Plan** to prepare for the next decade of environmental challenges specific to Lummi Nation.

These experiences have opened my eyes to what we, the Nooksack Tribe, are missing—proactive planning, interdepartmental coordination, and readiness for the changes already affecting our lands and people. There is no reason a tribal community as strong as ours should be unprepared. We have the knowledge and capacity to build a future that generations can rely on.

My priorities as a candidate are focused on realistic, immediate action to strengthen and protect our Tribe:

- **Update outdated Tribal laws and policies** to increase transparency and accountability.

- **Reinstate the TERO program** to create fair and sustainable job opportunities for Nooksack members.
- **Develop safe and reliable educational facilities** to support our youth and working families.
- **Strengthen long-term housing and elder care programs** so that no one in our community is left behind.
- **Improve interdepartmental and committee coordination** for more efficient operations and effective use of tribal resources.
- **Strengthen partnerships with outside agencies** to protect our Treaty rights, lands, and natural resources.
- **Invest in community-driven economic development** that benefits tribal members directly, not outside interests.

I have spent years attending council meetings, speaking out, and calling for accountability. I have seen our Tribe miss opportunities because our representatives were absent from critical discussions that directly affected our rights. That must end. I am known for being direct but fair, honest yet compassionate, and always open to listening. My elders taught me that leadership means listening first, then acting with integrity. I will not tolerate nepotism, favoritism, or wasteful spending that hurts our community. Respect must be earned through action, and I intend to lead by that example.

If elected, I will bring accountability, compassion, and determination to the Tribal Council. I am not here for personal recognition—I am here to rebuild trust, strengthen our community, and protect our lands and resources. Our ancestors fought hard for our rights and lands, and we must continue their work with courage, transparency, and unity. Together, we can reclaim our voice and our future as Nooksack people.

Respectfully,
Shelbi Madera
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