

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

I am deeply motivated to pursue a Master of Environmental Studies due to my profound personal connection to the environment, particularly as a member of the Skokomish Nation. My upbringing, deeply rooted in traditional Salish culture, has instilled in me a profound reverence for natural resources. I have cultivated a deep connection to the land through hunting, fishing, and the invaluable time spent with my great-grandfather, grandfather, father, and many other elders of the Skokomish and other Tribal Nations. Their teachings, which emphasize the importance of environmental stewardship, never taking more than we needed. These lessons have shaped my unwavering commitment to this cause and instilled in me a profound sense of duty, especially regarding preserving Puget Sound and the salmon population, elk, deer, and other species and the dwindling natural habitat they have left.

Having emerged in Salish culture my entire life, I enjoy traditional Salish carving, weaving, and many other art mediums, learning and teaching at every opportunity. In 2019, I earned my Bachelorette of Arts degree in Native Studies, studying with Gary and Yvonne Peterson at s'g'wi g'wi ? altx<sup>w</sup> : House of Welcome. Making excellent use of Evergreen State College's liberal arts, I studied sustainability, combining various disciplines, including science, social science, and humanities. While in my undergraduate program, I was honored to work with Greg Colfax (Makah elder) on the Welcome Woman, my capstone project during my Senior year at Evergreen State College. I followed my dad's footsteps, carving the same feet he carved in 1988.

My work at the college in both my undergrad and graduate program in sustainability has allowed me the opportunity to be awarded a two-year Sarah Bilezikian award in 2022. Once awarded this scholarship prompted me to take the cultural restoration ecology class in the Spring

quarter last year resulting in even more interest in the MES program. Since taking the class last Spring, I wished there was a way I could complete both.

As time passed, immersed into the MPA program, it became increasingly evident that to be an effective advocate for tribal sovereignty and environmental protection, I must equip myself with a more comprehensive knowledge base. In the MPA program I gained valuable skills and knowledge in Tribal and state policy, and I realized I must apply for the MES program at Evergreen to satisfy all of my educational goals.

Currently I strive to complete my Master of Public Administration Tribal Governance degree, focused on tribal sovereignty and intergovernmental relations, in preparation to collaborate with other state and federal political players and establish sustainability. In addition, I plan to be a tribal liaison to make a change in my education; I continue to extend my time to mentor the youth of the Skokomish and other tribes, passing down ancestral knowledge and traditions. Attending the MES program will benefit all the work that I face ahead of me. This advanced education will enhance my capacity to advocate for environmental preservation and make a substantial and enduring impact on my ancestors and future generations.