Vince Cooke, Makah Tribal member, is the son of John and Loretta Cooke. Vince’s maternal great-grandmother was Isabell Ides, who participated in the last traditional whale hunt in the early 1900s. She gave Vince his traditional name of *Hapinax*, which has been passed down for seven generations. Vince went to high school at Neah Bay, attended Concordia College and is presently working to complete his bachelor’s degree in the Reservation–Based, Community Determined Program at The Evergreen State College.

The oral history of the Makah demonstrates a long history of aboriginal whaling, which has been suspended and re-established many times. More recently, the practice was suspended in the 1920s because of the depletion of the humpback and gray whale stocks due to the coastal whaling industry. After the gray whale was removed from the Endangered Species List, the Makah re-asserted their whaling rights. With the support and guidance of the United States government and the International Whaling Commission, the Makah successfully hunted a gray whale on May 17, 1999. Federal law allows the Makah to hunt and kill one baleen whale, typically a gray whale, each year.

The story of the whale hunt, and some of Vince Cooke’s thoughts and feelings during this period, are recorded in the book, *A Whale Hunt: How a Native American Village did what no one Thought It Could.*

Vince is one of those people who has extensive experiences in both his personal and professional life that have taught him a great deal. He is one of the co-authors in the publication, *Native American Traditional and Contemporary Knowledge of the Northern Olympic Peninsula Nearshore*, see [http://www.coastalwatershedinstitute.org/media/Nearshore$20Studynomaps.pdf](http://www.coastalwatershedinstitute.org/media/Nearshore%2420Studynomaps.pdf)

Throughout his lifetime, Vince’s interests have been largely focused on culture and history. As a younger man, he worked closely with Dr. Dale Croes at the Hoko River site, which was home to the ancestors of the Makah culture. Excavation of the Hoko River Wet/Dry Sites began in 1973. At the wet/dry site, researchers discovered twenty-five layers of well-preserved organic vegetal mats in the silt and sand deposits along the edge of the river. Through excavating and analyzing these layers, scientists were able to draw conclusions about the people who lived here.

Archaeologists discovered a variety of artifacts from the wet site, including basketry, cords, a variety of fishing hooks, a 3,000 year-old fishnet (which is constructed from split spruce boughs), tiny stone blades (with their original cedar handles still intact), wood working tools, anchor stones with binding, various hafted microliths (such as fish knives) and micro blades, carved wood art, a variety of wooden objects, animal bone, shellfish remains, and plant remains. The abundance of flatfish, roundfish, rockfish, and over 400 wooden offshore-fishing hooks found in the wet site suggest the presence of fisheries.

A picture of Vince working at the Ozette site while excavating a cedar bark cape is included in the book, *From the Hands of a Weaver: Olympia Peninsula Basketry through Time*, by Jacilee Wray. More information about Vince’s participation in this archaeological work can also be found here, from a newspaper article in the 1980s: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1314&dat=19830814&id=je8vAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ve4DAAAAIBAJ&pg=7217,6706889>.

In 1991, Makah Tribal waters were impacted when the Chinese-owned Tenyo Maru suffered an oil spill. This oil spill caused the death of all sorts of marine life, including up to ten percent of the known world population of the marbled murrelet. As Environmental Health Specialist during this time, Vince Cooke was instrumental in helping to develop a 15-year long restoration plan for the Makah Tribe. As part of this effort, Vince secured a $10,000 grant to install panels that discussed seabird and sensitive areas.This public education project consists of a panel that highlights the ecology and sensitivity of nesting seabirds and kelp along the Olympic Peninsula and the impact of past oil spills, use of the area by marine traffic, and the need to take care to prevent spills like the Tenyo Maru incident. The panel was installed at a major trailhead on the Olympic Peninsula (Shi Shi Beach). Two other complementary panels were installed at nearby trailheads by the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) and the Makah Indian Tribe. More information on Tenyo Maru can be found at http://access.nwifc.org/newsinfo/documents/newsletters/2006\_3\_Fall.pdf.

Vince sits on the Board of Directors of the Coastal Watershed Institute, which is a nonprofit organization that formed in 1996 as the result of the common interests of several resource managers and scientists who have a commitment to northwest ecosystems. The Institute’s goal is to promote partnerships that foster protection and long term wise management of natural ecosystems.

In 2005, Vince Cooke was responsible for securing a grant for $134,000 in order to obtain the first Tribally-owned Oil Spill Response Trailer. “The Makah Tribe was the first tribe in the Northwest to receive their own oil spill response trailer,” said Vince Cooke, environmental division manager for the Makah Tribe. “More than 15,000 vessels transit Makah waters each year. The community has been hard hit by oil spills in the past. This improves the tribe’s emergency response capabilities,” said Cooke.

Besides getting the trailer, there were also fifteen tribal members that were trained to use the contents of the trailer to respond to oil spills. “Three spills from ships in 1972, 1988 and 1991 killed thousands of birds and fouled tens of miles of beach. These spills and the threat of more led the tribe to push for the state to station a rescue tug in Neah Bay from September through early spring. The tug helps assure that disabled vessels don’t run aground, fouling beaches and wildlife,” added Vince.

The issues of oil spills and their impact on coastal waters also influenced Vince to become involved with the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST), which is a citizen science project of the University of Washington in partnership with state, tribal, and federal agencies, environmental organizations, and community groups. COASST believes citizens of coastal communities are essential scientific partners in monitoring marine ecosystem health while collaborating with citizens, natural resource management agencies, and environmental organizations, will work together to develop effective marine conservation solutions.

Vince also became interested in the work of other tribes in developing emergency response around homeland security issues, which led to his involvement with the Northwest Tribal Emergency Management Council (NWTEMC), which is a consortium of tribes involved as first responders. The NWTEMC-NTEMC remains committed to Sovereign Immunity, assisting the Tribal partners with building infrastructure and internal capacity. There are many groups out there that want to come into the Tribe and be the Incident Commanders, the Incident Management Team, and the First Responders. The NWTEMC wants to continue to help the Tribal Nations to remain in the driver’s seat of their own incidents, and the best way to accomplish this is to continue their good work in the areas of sharing information, training, skill sets, resources and best practices. Vince worked with NWTEMC over the period of many years.

 Vince Cooke has also served as the Environmental Health Specialist for the Makah Tribe, and he was instrumentally involved in the development of the Indoor Air Health Study, which examined the air quality of the interior of many aging buildings and homes, which is an issue of utmost concern to Tribal members, who are oftentimes forced to stay indoors during periods of intense rain during the winter and spring months. More about this study is available at <http://www4.nau.edu/eeop/air_quality/docs/AkIAQ_MakahIAQQAPP.pdf>.

Vince’s longstanding interest in environmental issues impacting Indian people led him to becoming involved in *This is Indian Country*, which is a Native-directed, Washington State non‐profit organization, whose board of directors, besides Vince Cooke, include **Michael Harris,** Contributing Producer, ABC News; **Kevin Ely,** Network Photojournalist, ABC News; **Lois Allen,** Executive Secretary, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Enrolled Member, Colville Confederated Tribes; Victoria Hykes Steere JD, Assistant Professor, Liberal Studies, Alaska Pacific University; Jaime Martin, Chief Administrative Services Officer, Snoqualmie Tribe; Enrolled Member, Snoqualmie Tribe (also Yakama and Duwamish), and Willie Frank III, Vice Chair, Nisqually Tribal Council; Enrolled Member, Nisqually Tribe. More information about this work and the resulting films and documentaries made by this group can be found here: <http://www.thisisindiancountry.org/>.

 Although there is an untold amount of work that Vince has been involved in which is not included in this biography, it is also important to note that since joining the Reservation-Based, Community Determined Program, Vince has been involved in many different class projects, that range from identifying the need for 24-hour coverage for people who are in need of counselling for alcohol and substance abuse. He also arranged for Dottie Chambliss, a Makah elder, to come to the Saturday class to share her knowledge about the use of Native plants as tools, medicine, and food.

“Vince brings a rare gift of curiosity, enthusiasm, and commitment to community to our class work, and we very much enjoy having him in the Reservation-Based, Community Determined Program,” shared Cindy Marchand-Cecil, Program Director.