

## Don Wedll

Good morning. I've been thinking about what information and the types of things that have opened over the years that help people understand the Commission and understand the relationship between tribes and the commission and where things should go in the future.

To historically give you a little perspective, back in the early '70s I worked at Mille Lacs for a number of years. There was an elderly gentleman there who had told me that he grew up in a *wigwam*. He really hadn't seen a white person until he was about 15 years old, and he was about 80 at the time. He said "Do you want to see my license?" And I was looking at him and I was thinking license, what's he talking about. He said, "My hunting license." And I thought this guy's never bought a hunting license in his life, I don't think, but okay, I'll go along with this. And he took out his billfold and he opened it up and he had a button in there and it said, 'I'm an Indian'. It was before I really understood treaty rights. My first thought was if you show that to a game warden, he might not think that's going to work. Later on, when we went through this litigation and we dealt with these issues, it was really pretty clear that that was his license. He understood and he'd heard through oral tradition what these rights were and that they were there and that he had this unique right to gather resources that was helpful for him and his family.

And I remember his wife talking about how she was sick and she had very bad diabetes, and she said, "It's because I can't eat the foods that I'm used to." And over the years, there's a lot of information about the change in diet of any group of people, that that will have severe impacts on your health. And I think that when we talk about these gathering, hunting and fishing resources and the economic and cultural value of them, that the real value is in your health. Those types of resources have to be incorporated into your diet, and they have to be utilized that way. The value to the tribal people will be tremendous in years of life. Issues of health and care will be significant because these are very important things that have had years and years and generations and generations in your ancestry and use and they have to be continued.

And I think that no matter what nationality you are, you should understand the foods of your nationality and try to include those into your diet as much as possible as it really does involve your health and conditions in your life. It takes just this minute amount of chemical change to affect your life dramatically. We really don't understand very much of that in relationship to health. Some little bug, some little micro-organism can affect us forever. And so we need to think about that as part of this whole issue and of the value of that for tribal people and the use of those resources.

One of the things that this old man and a number of other old people told me, including a couple prominent tribal leaders, Roger Jordaine from Red Lake and Wendell Chino, who was a Mescalero Apache, about the use of resources and to take only what you needed. And that always felt to me like well, what happens if I need a Cadillac? How much of the resource do I take in order to support my Cadillac? And I didn't understand that the other part of taking what you need, and they said, "Just take what you need and don't waste anything." The second part of that that took me a long time to understand. When you take what you need you're taking from something else and so you have an obligation to turn something back to that entity.

In general, if we take some fish, we put some tobacco back. If you take a deer, you put some tobacco back in exchange for the life that you took that's going to benefit you. When you think about taking what you need, you also have to take into account, you're taking the life of something else so that you can live, and that exchange is much bigger than the idea of just taking

what you need. You must continue that and you must continue that relationship and understand that and if you don't understand that, and you don't use that wisely, the impacts of that will be very significant also. It's always difficult to understand and try to figure out where that is, but it seems to me taking what you need and understanding that relationship is a very important one. Sometimes, we forget about the second part of that relationship and we need to devote some energy and thought to that.

In the future, I think, the things that GLIFWC will do and the people working for GLIFWC will help develop will be the access to resources so that people can utilize them in a meaningful way. As tribal governments now move ahead with new issues and with new concepts, some of that was talked about yesterday regarding the relationships of how resources will be managed, will be dealt with. What's the best way to deal with global warming? All of those impacts are things that are going to be issues for the future.

You really need to find young people who have an ability to look at this and to stay with this issue for a long time. We've really resolved the very simple ones. The 1837 litigation was really the simple litigation, which also was extraordinarily complex. It was really the easiest one of the other issues that are out there. In the future, people who take on those tasks have a very complex interwoven issue to deal with and they have to be willing to spend a career, a lifetime working through those. You need somebody 30 years younger because it's going to take that long to get through there, and if you stop somewhere in that process, you start all over again because it has to be continued that way. I know there are a lot of people who would like to have discussions here in this group and so I'm going to cut my discussion a little shorter and move to the next person.