

Nisqually Indian Tribe/Transportation Overview



NISQUALLY INDIAN TRIBE

- The Nisqually reservation is located in rural Thurston and Pierce Counties on the Nisqually river.
- The reservation is approximately 5,000 acres in size, with 2/3 of the reservation under the control of JBLM. The remaining reservation lands are located west of the Nisqually river in Thurston County and contain a population around 500 persons, including both Indian and non-Indian households. The tribal membership is around 840 persons.
- The Nisqually Tribe is one of the largest employers in Thurston County, with over 1,200 employees in tribal government and enterprises.

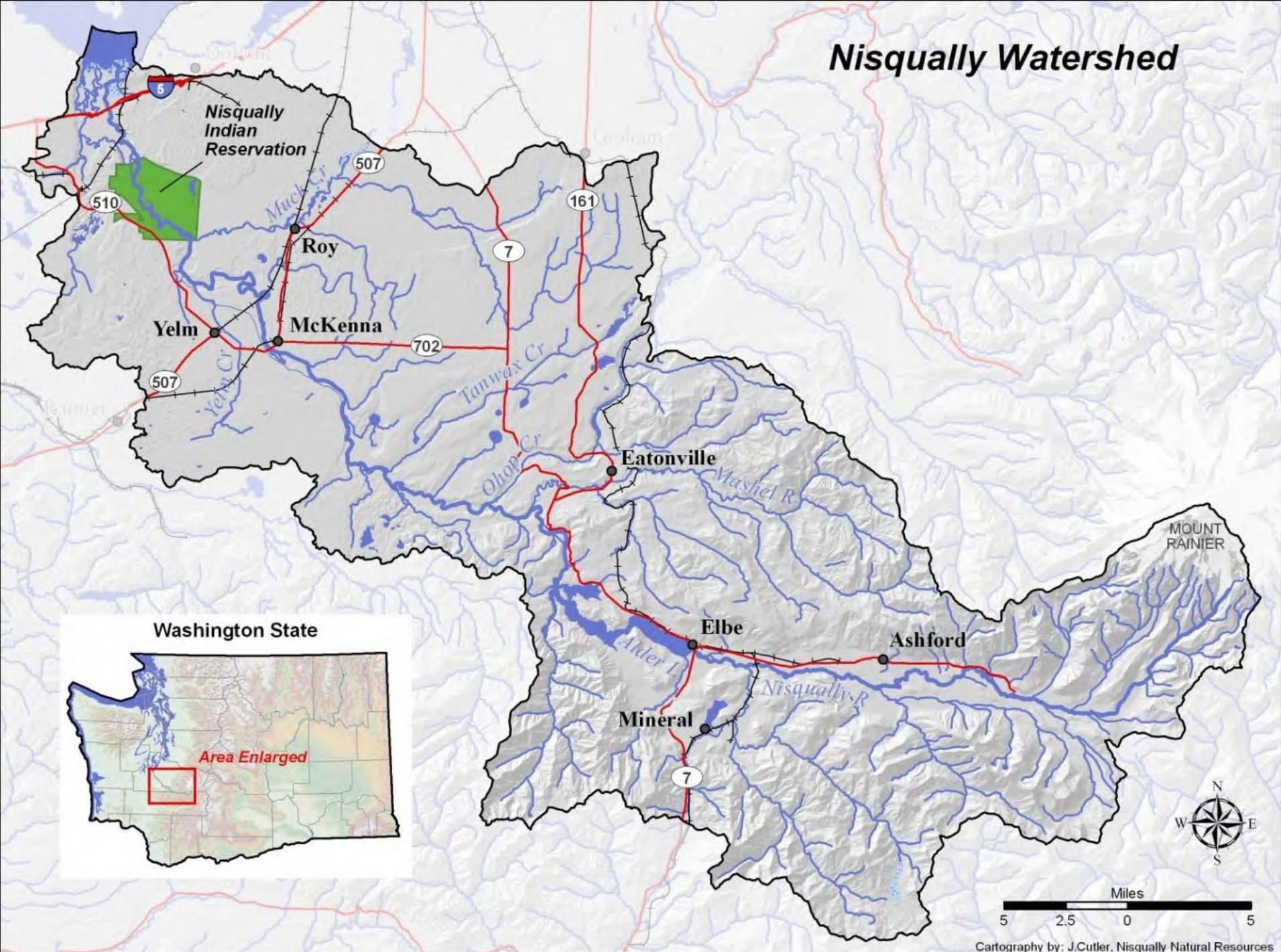
Transportation and mobility issues have always been important to the Tribe.

In pre-contact times, the rivers, prairies, pathways and waterways of the south sound area formed the Tribe's transportation network.

Horses and canoes, and travel on foot, were important parts of that system.

When settlers began to populate the area in the mid 19th century, existing tribal trails and routes were repurposed as roadways to accommodate the development of the region. Nisqually valley, Yelm, the Nisqually river, south sound prairies, Olympia, and marine water areas currently served by roadways were all linked by a previous tribal trails system.

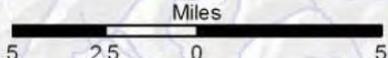
Nisqually Watershed



Washington State



Area Enlarged



The Nisqually reservation itself really had no roadways until the 1930's, when the civilian conservation corps (CCC) built logging and land management roadways on reservation lands. These old dirt roads are still in existence, and have actually formed the backbone of the Tribe's on-reservation road system.

Reservation road development at Nisqually begin in the early 1970s when the first paved roadway was built on the reservation. This was done for a non-Indian housing development on 25th avenue, and did not serve or benefit the Tribe.

Several years later the Tribe was able to secure BIA funding to design and construct the first paved roadway on the reservation serving tribal folks: Peter Kalama Drive.

In the intervening 40 years, the Tribe has built around 5 miles of paved roadway on the reservation.

These roadways connect tribal facilities, tribal housing, and tribal enterprises, and also connect the reservation community with the larger off-reservation area and economy.

Much of the funding for these reservation roads has come from the Tribe's fuel compact with the State of Washington. The compact provides for the Tribe to collect fuel tax from its gas stations and budget these funds for transportation and public safety.

EXISTING UTILITIES AND LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE NOT GUARANTEED TO BE COMPLETELY OR ACCURATE. THE CONTRACTOR MUST RELY ON FIELD LOCATION INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE RESPECTIVE UTILITIES.



The Tribe has an active transportation program in place for the reservation. Roads are planned and developed in accordance with a tribal master planning program that seeks to provide a framework for the orderly development tribal improvements and infrastructure.

The Tribe has an active Public Works program that budgets funds annually for tribal road development and maintenance. Tribal roadways are viewed as an important community asset, which need to be maintained.

The Tribe also operates a transit program that provides services to the on-reservation area, and links the reservation to the larger off-reservation community and transit system.

The Tribe carries out a periodic road inventory process, and long term transportation planning program, using BIA road funding and tribal funds. There are currently over 5 miles of additional tribal paved roadways being planned for the reservation area.

Ove the past 10-15 years, the Tribe has become increasingly aware of the importance of off-reservation road and transportation systems, how these off-reservation systems are critical to tribal community development.

*Many tribal members live off-reservation and utilize off-reservation transportation and roads on a daily basis.

*Over half of tribal employees live off-reservation and commute to and from work every day on local roads and highways.

*Tribal enterprises and programs rely on off-reservation roadways to bring customers to the reservation to patronize tribal stores and the gaming enterprise.



The Tribe has worked extremely well with Thurston County, Pierce County, TRPC, and WSDOT on road planning and improvements on and near the reservation. There have been several important projects on SR-510 over the past 10 years, including a road widening, the installation of traffic signals, and a double roundabouts project.



Improvement to the Yelm/Lacey highway, Reservation Road, and the Nisqually River bridge on Old Highway 99 have also been helpful.

Even Interstate 5, although it is located 6 miles from the reservation, has become a critical part of the Tribe's transportation strategy.

Customers, employees, and visitors from other local governments travel on I-5 to reach the reservation on a daily basis. The frequent congestion and increased travel times experienced on I-5 impact every aspect of the Tribe's business and operations on a daily basis.

And we have seen that when there are backups or disruptions on I-5, the entire reservation community is immediately impacted from the resulting traffic gridlock on SR-510.

Tribal plans for community and economic development increasingly focus on off-reservation areas, which increase the Tribe's dependence on a good functioning regional transportation system.

The Nisqually Tribe looks forward to working with its local government partners over the next 5-10 years in addressing transportation issues both on and off the reservation, including the critical issue of Improving I-5 congestion, and addressing environmental concerns, in the Nisqually valley/Nisqually delta area.

It will all take time and be a challenge, but I think we can get it done.