



## United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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### **USET Resolution No. 2015:026**

## **ECOSYSTEM RECOVERY AND THE RETURN OF PRODUCTIVITY OF FOOD FISHERY FOR TRIBAL SURVIVAL AND SUSTENANCE**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Incorporated (USET) is an inter-tribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** since time immemorial Indigenous People have depended on Mother Earth for survival; and
- WHEREAS,** the watersheds are an important part of Tribal and ancestral homelands because they provide an abundant source of natural resources such as drinking water, agricultural use, plant medicine, plant foods and other traditional cultural practices, and
- WHEREAS,** it is vital that watersheds be kept as natural as possible so as to enable both sea-run fish and resident fish populations such as Atlantic Salmon, Shad, Blueback Herring, Alewife, Brook Trout, Bass, Perch to continue to spawn and the continued growth and cultivation of traditional plants, and
- WHEREAS,** many magnificent and productive watersheds have suffered hundreds of years of damage from over-exploitation of the natural resources by industry, dams, pollution, and sewage thereby extirpating or endangering the cultural sustenance of many USET Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** USET Tribes support enhancements to the natural and built environment to bring back spawning fish, fertility, productivity and abundance; and
- WHEREAS,** USET Tribes have a unique cultural and historical relationship with the natural ecosystems and fishery restoration is key to maintaining this connection; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribes have a duty to protect and preserve river systems, indigenous food fisheries, sustenance fishing and fishing rights of Tribal people so that future generations will continue to survive; and
- WHEREAS,** the natural ecosystems and related natural communities have a fundamental right to exist, flourish and evolve, and waters have a right to be clean and flow unobstructed, and fish have a right to spawn and to live out their natural history and life cycles; and
- WHEREAS,** human activities have seriously upset the productivity and natural balance of the river ecosystem and life cycles of the native fishery and has put many of the Tribal traditional ecosystems into a state of distress; and
- WHEREAS,** action must be taken to remedy the distress; and

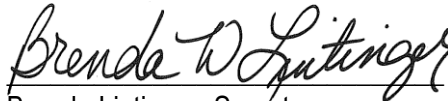
- WHEREAS,** the creatures of the Earth have fed and taken care of the people for thousands of years and it is now time repay the fish that are suffering and in distress. It is time for tribes to step forward to help and support the aquatic species, plants, medicines and other natural living life forms on a watersheds ecosystems are relevant in preserving, reviving, and restoring our cultures, and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** the USET Board of Directors endorse the recovery of all ecosystems so as to bring back the natural abundance and productivity of the food fishery and other natural resources such as drinking water, and botanical ecosystems for food and traditional cultural practices; and, be it further
- RESOLVED,** the USET Board of Directors request the federal government to exercise its trust responsibility to Tribes and the natural resources with development of a strategic plan, in partnership with Tribes, for ecosystem restoration with emphasis on restoring the food fishery and indigenous plant environment.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA, February 12, 2015.



Brian Patterson, President  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Brenda Lintinger, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

*“Because there is strength in Unity”*