

## CASE STUDY

### THE KALISPEL TRIBE OF INDIANS

#### SUSTAINING HARMONY WITH THE RIVER

For countless generations, the Kalispel Tribe has existed in harmony with “ntxwe”, the Pend Oreille River. As the tribe grew, increasing pressure was placed on the reservation’s sole transfer station; located near the river’s flood plain and adjacent to a buffalo pasture. Blowing trash, unauthorized dumping and excessive cost were just some of the challenges. The tribe also desired to implement recycling and food waste diversion, but funding and local infrastructure to do so were limited. Another consultant had produced an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, but it lacked actionable implementation steps and thus it remained just a report.

#### MAKING A PLAN

Once contracted, Resource Synergy conducted a waste characterization, interviewed stakeholders, and developed a Solid Waste Implementation Plan. The plan outlined 10 priorities, which if pursued in the prescribed order, would self-fund the overhaul of the reservation’s solid waste system. These included redesigning the transfer station, building specialized trailers for recycling, repurposing a compactor from Northern Quest Casino and hiring a Solid Waste Coordinator. Additionally, Resource Synergy successfully secured an EPA grant to fund an innovative initiative to raise pigs on the food scraps of the casino, which would then become pork for the restaurants.

#### THE PATH TO ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The Kalispel Tribe is now on a path to environmental stewardship and cost savings. The financial savings from compacting trash, coupled with the diversion of recyclables and food waste is expected to fully-fund the Solid Waste Coordinator position, creating a job for a tribal member. The transfer center is cleaner and more efficient, and the food scraps will enable a more sustainable and localized food system.



**Resource Synergy has connected with the tribe on many levels, understood our needs, and designed solutions that work for our unique circumstances.**

**-TELL HAMILTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
PLANNING & PUBLIC WORKS**