

Tacoma—

More than 700 sportsmen marched around the Federal Courthouse here today protesting an Indian fishing-rights decision by United States District Court Judge George H. Boldt.

Three trailered boats were parked in front of the courthouse and sportsmen carrying signs, fishing poles, nets, and American flags demonstrated peacefully against the decision that was highly favorable to the Indians.

Chartered buses carried sportsmen from Southwest Washington and Everett. Others came from as far away as Wenatchee and Spokane by car.

The protest was held as three scheduled days of post-trial motions began in the case. Both the State Fisheries and Game Departments have said they will appeal Judge Boldt's decision.

Judge Boldt upheld the rights of members of several Western Washington Indian tribes to fish with nets off reservation in accordance with terms of treaties signed in the 1850s. A key thrust of the decision said that Indians should be treated as equals in the taking of salmon and steelhead. He said he understood this to mean 50 percent for Indians and 50 percent for non-Indians.

Fisheries and Game Department officials have said it would be necessary to cut back on non-Indian commercial and sports fishing to provide for the Indian's shares under the decision.

During the demonstration, leaders used a bullhorn to shout questions eliciting pep rally type responses.

Sportsmen—including some women, some children and a few blacks and Asians—carried an array of signs in today's demonstration. One said: "Sportsmen's rights torn to a shred, screwed by a Boldt, without any thread."

Other signs said "Equal rights for All Citizens," "Fish for all," "What about our sons?," "This is 1974, not 1854."

The demonstration was organized by the Northwest Steelheader's council of Trout Unlimited but was supported by numerous fishing and hunting organizations.

Gary Ellis, Tacoma, president of the Northwest Steelheaders, said the turnout exceeded expectations. "When all these guys take a day off work, it shows they are concerned," Ellis said.

"I doubt that it would alter the decision but it certainly shows the concern sportsmen have for the resource. We certainly hope the Supreme Court will alter the decision."

Don Hannula, "Sportsmen Protest Decision," *Seattle Times*, March 5, 1974

Major opponents to treaty fishing rights were hunting and fishing organizations, not just the state of Washington's fisheries and game departments.