
In the summer of 2002, writer/environmentalist Karen Tootelian began caring for the eighty-nine-year-old Chief of the Mattaponi Tribe, Webster Little Eagle Custalow. What began as her personal journals evolved into a book about their deep friendship and compassion for one another. Told in Ms. Tootelian's poetic voice, this is also the story of the Mattaponi River, the battle Little Eagle began to save it from a reservoir, and about her own spiritual bond with this river.

The Chief and I is a lyrical tale that snakes along like an old, wise river. It weaves together many stories: the Chief's story, the story of the Mattaponi and of all American Indians, but mostly it is the story of one woman's battle to save the river that nourishes her. Savor this book, and think on the rivers in your life and how they sustain and support you and the communities you treasure. — *Rebecca Wodder, President, American Rivers*

Karen Tootelian's love of nature and the Mattaponi River are as profound as her relationship with her beloved Chief. Full of poetry, wisdom, and heart, *The Chief and I* will make readers cry, then go for a restorative walk in the woods or a swim in the nearest river. — *Chuck Epes, environmental advocate*

In so many Native American traditions, leadership is the responsibility to make way for new leaders. In *The Chief and I*, Karen not only shows the way for today's new leaders but takes the reader into the Native world view to understand the deeply profound qualities of just such egalitarian leadership. — *Rebecca L. Adamson, Founder, First Nations Development Institute, and President and Founder of First Peoples Worldwide*

The Chief and I



Karen Tootelian