



COAST SALISH GATHERING EXECUTIVE REPORT

The Coast Salish people came together to speak with One Voice for the protection of the land and waters of our aboriginal homeland and the preservation of our culture. As brothers and sisters with a shared culture and concerns in an endangered eco-region, we continued our dialogue on the need for strengthened environmental policies and practices in our homelands.

The purpose of the previous Coast Salish Gatherings was to bring together the indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea to speak as One Voice and to share our concerns with policy makers on the environmental issues that are threatening the indigenous life ways of the Salish Sea Eco Region. The Gathering is not a form of a government-to-government consultation process, but rather, a culturally appropriate process for an open dialogue to advise policy makers. We sat together in the homelands of Tulalip for our policy dialogue on common issues and actions that will protect our culture and the ecosystem from which it derives sustenance.

We had over 350 Coast Salish elders, chiefs, chairmen and environmental staff participated a shared, developed and recommended environmental policies and actions that will restore and protect the Salish Sea eco Region. As One Voice, our leaders, protectors and policy makers, we worked in collaboration to share issues and concerns within our shared homeland and water with representatives from Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency, Province of British Columbia and Washington State. The Gathering established a policy dialogue that generated a mission, prologue, a living environmental action plan to ensure the protection of our shared ecosystems and projects that will sustain the capacity to support the plan and actions. We have provided a present vision and a plan for the future, and tools to sustain our goals.

Prologue

We, the indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea, honor and respect our sacred trust to restore, preserve and protect our culture, treaties, aboriginal rights and the land, air and waters of the Salish Sea. Our sacred trust has been given to us from our ancestors and defines our role as protectors of our Mother Earth. We are entrusted with the protection and sustainability of environment and natural resources of our ancestral lands, watersheds, and estuarine waters of the Salish Sea. Our ancestors have passed down the traditional teachings of songs, dances, and spiritual ceremonies that reflect our relationship to the natural world and depict our identity and strengths of our peoples. Over the decades our lands and waters have been severely impacted by pollution that affects our culture, food, health, and economy. Most importantly hurting our elders who have relied on these since the beginning of time and threatening the life ways of our children's future.

We have always defended and protected our ancestral lands and waters, we seek to acknowledge our sacred alliance so we may work together as one proud nation. Our elders, leaders and community members have given us a strong message that our homelands and waters need to be protected, preserved and restored for future generations. With our commitment to our Sacred Trust, we will work together with the six governing bodies of the Salish Sea to overcome the environmental challenges to our shared homelands.

Mission Statement

We, the indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea, our autonomous status as sovereign Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations and our inherent responsibility as protectors of our Mother Earth, will continue to work together and speak with One Voice for the preservation, restoration, and protection of the Salish Sea Eco Region for the sustainability of our sacred inherent family rights and values that have been passed on to us by our ancestors.

Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Action Plan

Outcome: To conserve and restore the Salish Sea ecosystem to a level that ensures the sustainability of the Coast Salish People and our cultural life ways.

A. Coast Salish Priorities: Adequate clean air, water and land to sustain and protect the health of our Coast Salish People.

- Traditional Foods ~ Toxics and Depletion
 - Adequate terrestrial resources to sustain the diet, ceremonial, medicinal and cultural crafts of our Coast Salish People.
- Water ~ Quality and Quantity
 - Adequate marine resources to sustain the spiritual, subsistence, and economic endeavors of our aboriginal Coast Salish communities of the Salish Sea.
 - Clean water quality to sustain the Coast Salish communities of the Salish Sea
 - Clean water quantity for the present and future Coast Salish communities of the Salish Sea.
- Climate Change Impacts and Planning for Coast Salish Communities
 - Adequate planning and support to address the impacts of climate change in the Coast Salish communities.

B. Coast Salish Actions:

- Governance/Policy Actions
 - Equality in the shared roles for the Federal, State, Provincial and Coast Salish Tribes in the planning, implementation and management of Salish Sea eco region restoration and protection efforts.
 - The incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge in the restoration, implementation and management of the Salish Sea eco region.
 - The incorporation of climate change variables as critical factors in the planning of conservation and restoration efforts in the Salish Sea eco region.
 - Ecosystem Priorities
 - An adequate supply of riparian waters Salish Sea of a quality sufficient to maintain a healthy functioning estuarine ecosystem habitat.
 - Reduction of toxic depositions in Salish Sea to a level that supports a healthy functioning ecosystem.
 - Restoration and conservation of adequate marine and near-shore habitat to support Coast Salish goals for the Salish Sea.
 - Technical Priorities (examples)
 - Reduction to elimination on non-essential hard-armoring of the Salish Sea shoreline.
 - Adequate buffers and storm-water management practices to improve water quality in riparian systems.
 - Adequate in-stream flows to provide sufficient fresh water to maintain the estuarine character of the Salish Sea.
 - Eradication of invasive species that damage the Salish Sea ecosystem.
 - Adequate funding to address and plan for Climate Change impacts in the Salish Sea Eco Region.
 - Ample funding to support environmental program and project capacity (policy and science) building for the long-term sustainability of Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations.
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APPROVED ACTION PROJECTS

A. Coast Salish Environmental Information Sharing Project

A collaborative effort based coordinated by the Coast Salish Gathering to support and develop a website based information sharing program with GIS capabilities between Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations. The Coast Salish leadership has joined forces to begin the process of gathering information on all Coast Salish environmental projects, issues, and actions that have been or are being developed and implemented throughout the Salish Sea Eco Region.

Outcome: An information sharing website for the Tribes and Nations with access under a secured system.

Capabilities: The website will provide the project abstracts, location and contact information as a research tool for the tribal participants.

B. Water Quality Information Gathering Project

A collaborative effort coordinated by the Coast Salish Gathering to support and develop a water quality gathering project by the Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations. The Coast Salish leadership has joined forces to begin a unique process of gathering and sharing water quality information from the Salish Sea.

The Annual Canoe Journey is a traditional gathering of Coast Salish peoples, who travel through the water ways of the Salish Sea. The project proposes to collaborate with several canoe participants and request their permission to equip the canoes with water quality gathering tools and staff. The purpose is to gathering water quality information throughout the Salish Sea: from the waters of Bella Coola, British Columbia, through the Straits of Juan DeFuca and Puget Sound.

The outcome of the Water Quality Information Gathering Project will be an extensive gathering of water quality information that can be shared between the Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations. The long term objective will be to establish an annual collaboration with the Annual Canoe Journey to collect and provide water quality information through out the Salish Sea.

Capabilities: The information will be gathered and stored under the secured Coast Salish Gathering website and will be annually maintained and managed under the responsibility of the Coast Salish secretariats.

C. Coast Salish Environmental Indicators Project

A collaborative effort based under the Coast Salish Gathering to support and develop a Coast Salish Environmental Indicators project between the Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations. The Coast Salish leadership has joined forces to begin the process of gathering and developing environmental indicators that incorporate modern and traditional science from the Salish Sea. The outcome is to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with the science based environmental indicators of the Salish Sea. The blending of modern and traditional science will provide the leadership with information to develop policy to protect and sustain the culture of the Coast Salish Peoples.

Capabilities: The information will be gathered and stored with the Coast Salish Gathering website and will be annually maintained and managed under the responsibility of the Coast Salish secretariats.

OUTCOMES of action plan and Information sharing projects

Outcome 1: The Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations will share environmental platform nation wide to protect the Salish Sea Eco Region and with the shared responsibility will develop, manage and implement environmental policy to sustain the Coast Salish way of life.

Outcome 2: The Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations will streamline shared information and projects that will support the shared efforts of protecting and restoring the quality and quantity of the environment in the Salish Sea.

Outcome 3: The Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations will develop the policy and protocol for a Coast Salish TEK Environmental Indicator Plan that will be shared by the Coast Salish People to protect and restore the Salish Sea Eco Region.