

# 4th Annual Coast Salish Gathering



WESTERN WASHINGTON TRIBES AND  
BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS

JULY 6-8, 2009

Hosted by Squamish Nation at the Squamish Lil'Wat Culture Centre, Whistler, BC

**Remember where you come from. Remember where you live.**  
*The Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystems*



"Our footprints weigh heavily upon our Mother Earth. We must walk gently for everywhere we step is where our ancestors have been and where our children will go... either we act decisively now or face Armageddon."

Chief Gibby Jacob,  
Squamish Nation



"The health of the Salish Sea Ecosystems faces dire challenges that impact its vitality, productivity and our indigenous way of life. We must come together to restore and protect the Salish Sea environment and natural resources to sustain human health, aboriginal and treaty rights and cultural lifeways."

Chairman Brian Cladoosby,  
Swinomish Tribe

[www.coastsalishgathering.com](http://www.coastsalishgathering.com)



# Coast Salish Gathering

*Our Way*

Whistler, British Columbia

Host – Squamish Nation

July 6-8, 2009

## INVITED PARTICIPANTS

### COAST SALISH

British Columbia First Nations

Chiefs, Senior Leadership Representatives and Technical Staff

Western Washington Tribal Governments

Chairpersons, Senior Leadership Representatives

### Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency

Federal, State and Provincial agencies representatives

Other Environmental Groups

### First Nation and Tribal Organizations Environmental Groups

## OBJECTIVES

- Shared policy dialogue to discuss and develop a Coast Salish *Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem* position report. The report will focus on the importance of restoring and protecting the Salish Sea Ecosystem and how the health of the ecosystem impacts the human health and the sustainability of aboriginal and treaty rights and cultural life ways.

#### POLICY DIALOGUE

- ✓ Discuss the importance of the ecosystem and how it sustains our lifeways.
- ✓ Discuss the ecosystem's health with Federal Agencies.
- ✓ Discuss and recommend actions that will strengthen and improve our relationships.
- ✓ Shared policy development and actions between all governing entities and peoples of the Salish Sea Eco Region.
- ✓ Discuss and identify Coast Salish environmental issues and actions with the intent of strengthening the policy and actions in the Salish Sea Eco Region.

#### OUTCOMES

- ✓ Approval of Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem position paper, identify report content, timeline and task team.
- ✓ Strengthen Relationship with federal, state and provincial agencies.

- Strategic planning exercise to develop long term sustainability plans for the Coast Salish Gathering Initiative

#### STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

- ✓ Discuss SWOT (strength, weaknesses, objectives and threats) and determine short and long term direction of the Coast Salish Gathering

#### OUTCOMES

- ✓ SWOT Analysis
- ✓ Long and Short Term Goals

# HEALTH OF THE SALISH SEA ECOSYSTEM REPORT

**PURPOSE** – The shared policy dialogue is to discuss and develop a *Coast Salish Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem* position report.

**THE REPORT** will focus on the importance of restoring and protecting the Salish Sea Ecosystem and how the health of the ecosystem impacts the human health and the sustainability of aboriginal and treaty rights and cultural life ways.

**INTENTION** – The outline below is to give all participants an outline of possible direction for the Day 1 discussion and the possible content in a Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem report. It is meant to engage participants to identify content and layout for the Position Report.

## 1) What is Coast Salish

- a) Coast Salish History
- b) Map

## 2) Discuss the Coast Salish Nation

- a) Richness in Resources
- b) Unique as One Nation within on Ecosystem

## 3) Gathering Background

- a) Not a Government to Government consultation

## 4) Purpose of Report

- a) What makes the health of the Salish Sea so important to the Coast Salish
  - i) Human Health
  - ii) Aboriginal and Treaty Rights
  - iii) Cultural Sustainability

## 5) Report Executive Summary

### 6) Content:

- a) Policy:
  - i) Jurisdictional differences impact upon the ecosystem
  - ii) Water Quality and Quantity
- b) Science
  - i) Long and Short Term Science
  - ii) Use of Traditional Knowledge
  - iii) Renewable Resources vs Non Renewable Resources
- c) Cultural Life way
  - i) Sustainable Land Use Plans
  - ii) Toxics in Traditional Food Webs
  - iii) Loss of resources impact upon cultural practices

## 7) Conclusion

# Conference Agenda (Draft)

**Sunday, July 5, 2009 – Travel to Whistler**

**Remember Enhanced ID, Tribal ID or Passport**

**Monday, July 6, 2009**

**7:30 am to 8:00 am Continental Breakfast**

**8:00 am to 9:15 am – Welcome and Opening Ceremony**

Opening Comments: Chief Gibby Jacob, Squamish Nation and Chief Leonard Andrew, Lil'Wat Nation and Chairman Brian Cladoosby, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

► Gathering History ► Protocol of Dialogue ► Share 2009 Gathering Purpose and Outcomes

**9:15 am to 10:30 am – Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem:** A discussion on the health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem and the environmental impacts upon the human health and aboriginal and treaty rights and cultural life ways.

**10:30 am to 10:45 pm – Break**

**10:45 am to 11:45 am – Status of the Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem: Federal Caucus from Environment Canada and United States Environmental Protection Agency**

Environment Canada Regional Director Paul Kluckner and EPA Regional Administrator Michelle Pirzadeh

Agencies Invited: BC Region Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Ministry of Environment, Washington State Department of Ecology and Puget Sound Partnership.

**11:45 am to 1:00 pm – Lunch**

**1:00 pm to 2:15 pm – Opportunity for tribal, first nation and government leadership in a policy dialogue address environmental concerns and natural resource impacts within the Salish Sea Ecosystem.**

**2:15 pm to 2:30 pm Break**

**2:30 pm to 4:00 pm Discussion of shared trans-boundary policy and science opportunities**

- Changes in the 13 Moons Calendar: Darren Blaney
- Coast Salish Gathering Water Quality Project: Sarah Akin and Eric Grossman
- Georgia Basin Puget Sound Ecosystem Conference Report
- Joint Statement of Cooperation Report
- Salish Sea Stewardship Fund

**4:00 pm to 5:00 pm Squamish Nation Presentation on Best Practices**

**5:00 pm to 5:30 pm Witnesses**

**6:00 pm to 8:30 pm Reception, Dinner,**

**Presentation: Sonny McHale, Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Centre**

**Performance: Welh Tima Kexwusem Dance Group**

## Tuesday, July 7, 2009

7:30 am to 8:30 am – Continental Breakfast

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8:30 am to 9:15 – Over View of the Day's Schedule  
Introduction of Facilitator  
Overview of Gathering's Initiatives

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9:15 am to 10:30 am – Identify core values and principles of relationship that express the our 'soul' and serve as the grounding for engaging in the Gathering and discuss why we exist.

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10:30 am to 10:45 am – Break

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10:45 am to 12:00 pm – Determine strengths and weaknesses inside the institution while evaluating threats and opportunities outside the institution (SWOT Analysis)

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12:00 pm to 1:00 pm – Lunch

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1:00 pm to 1:30 – Keynote: Billy Frank Jr. Vision of Tomorrow (TBC)

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1:30 pm 2:30 pm – Continue SWOT

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2:30 pm to 2:45 pm – Break

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2:45 pm to 5:00 pm – Develop a shared vision of a future state. Answer the question "If we could have an initiative of our dreams and the impact we most desire, what would our efforts be for the future.

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5:00 pm to 5:30 – Witness Testimony

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6:00 pm - 8:30 pm – Reception, Dinner

**PRESENTATION** – Yukon River Intertribal Watershed request to CSG to partner for the  
*Protect the Health of our Ecosystems'*

**PERFORMANCE** – Lil'Wat Cultural Group

## Wednesday, July 8, 2009

7:30 am to 8:30 am Continental Breakfast

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8:30 am to 9:00 am Wrap up the Health of the Salish Sea Ecosystem Report

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9:00 am to 9:30 am Wrap up on the SWOT and Next Steps

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9:30 am to 10:00 am – Coast Salish Atlas and Coast Salish Climate Change Conference Update

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10:00 am to 10:30 am – Discussion on support mechanism for Salish Sea, the Name

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10:30 am to 10:45 am – Break

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10:45 am to 12:00 pm – Closing Remarks including Chief Gibby Jacob and Chairman Brian Cladoosby

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# The Coast Salish Gathering

The Coast Salish Gathering provides a tribal environmental policy dialogue and trans boundary science and communication tools in the Salish Sea Ecosystem.

The Gathering participants are the indigenous people of the Salish Sea Ecosystem and representation comes from the Chiefs of 44 British Columbia First Nations and Chairmen of 22 Western Washington Tribes.

The Gathering provides a policy platform for the Salish Sea government structures, ranging from policy makers, elders, teachers, delegates, technical staff and children. We address environmental issues that are constrained through jurisdictional and cultural differences.

We believe the process helps our Coast Salish Nation, which is one of the largest trans- boundary nations in North America, provide a collective voice and tools to address the issues that stretch across the Coast Salish Nation's homelands which is 550,000 square miles, 600 million acres and over 60 rivers and streams.

Our homelands and waters are within in one shared ecosystem, the Salish Sea Ecosystem, where we find common air shed, common watersheds, a common flyway for migratory birds and habitat for fish, and common urban growth pressures.

The Salish Sea area has experienced rapid growth during the last several decades. Between the years 1991-2000 the population of the area grew at a rate of 18.65%, reasonably faster than the 11.6% and 9.7% reported for the whole of the U.S. and Canada respectively. By the year 2020 the population is expected to increase another 2 million bringing the total close to 9 million people.

Growing population is a major underlying force contributing to the increasing stress being placed on our unbalanced and unhealthy ecosystem.

Our homeland is rich in a diverse array of marine and upland resources unique to this area that sustain our cultures and traditions. Salmon are the icon of this essential and yet endangered connection of our people to our land and waters.

Our homelands and our resources are under significant pressure from population growth, industrial expansion and economic demands.

Due to the serious environmental problems confronting the Salish Sea, Tribal and First Nation leaders along with Government officials need to engage in a policy dialogue to come to common ground on identifying environmental issues and discuss, share and recommend policies and action in the shared region.

We come together in our Coast Salish traditional ways 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, we share our culture and concerns for the endangered eco-region, and continue our dialogue on the need for strengthened environmental policies and management practices in our homelands.

Our shared efforts support restoring and protecting our Salish Sea Ecosystem through support of trans boundary ecosystem approaches. We provide communication between tribes and governments, networking and information sharing, and trans boundary science projects. These tools provide the Coast Salish Nation with an opportunity to build a foundation based environmental issues and actions within the Salish Sea Ecosystem.

## HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Four Annual Coast Salish Gatherings with an increase attendance rate each year from 90-350.**
- **Annual Support and Acknowledgement from six governing bodies; Coast Salish Western Washington Tribes, British Columbia First Nations, Environment Canada, and US Environmental Protection Agency**
- **Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Inventory of Concerns**
- **Coast Salish Gathering Environmental Action Plan; Tribal Journey Water Quality Project**
- **Partnerships**  
**Federal: EPA, Environment Canada, USGS, INAC**



## 2008 COAST SALISH GATHERING EXECUTIVE REPORT

In February 2008, the Coast Salish People gathered in the Tulalip traditional homelands to speak with One Voice for the protection of our ancestral homelands and waters of Salish Sea.

We shared our common concerns on environmental impacts that are destroying our rich lands and resources and, developed our strategy of how we, as One, would take action to restore and protect our Mother Earth.

Our focus was to find means of resolving critical issues together and to strengthen the environmental policies and practices in our homelands.

Coast Salish leadership made it clear that the Gathering is not a form of a government-to-government consultation process, but rather, a culturally appropriate process for an open dialogue to reach consensus and advise policy makers of issues of concern.

Over 300 Coast Salish elders, chiefs, chairmen, mothers, grand mothers, and environmental staff participated in the Gathering, sharing concerns, developing an action agenda and recommending environmental policies to restore and protect the Salish Sea Eco Region.

As One Voice, our leaders, protectors and policy makers, worked in collaboration to share issues and concerns within our shared homeland and waters with representatives from Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency, Province of British Columbia and Washington State.

The Gathering sustained a spirited policy dialogue that generated a mission and expansive prologue statement to guide Coast Salish environmental actions.

These discussions produced a vigorous environmental action plan focused on the protection of our shared ecosystems and related activities that will sustain the capacity of the Coast Salish effort.

## COAST SALISH GATHERING PROLOGUE

**W**e, 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.

**W**e 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.

**W**e 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.

### Coast Salish Gathering 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.***



# 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.**

**The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide a common ground of environmental plan that can help us work together to address our concerns. The Plan does not replace any one government's plan, but rather it can be used to help one another with a shared voice.**

## 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 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 Salish communities of the Salish Sea and support to address the impacts of climate change in the Coast Salish communities.

## COAST SALISH ACTION COMPONENTS

### **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 Actions**

- 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 Actions (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.

# INFORMATION SHARING AND NETWORKING ON COMMON POLICY AND SCIENCE

## Coast Salish Gathering Website and Newsletter



A collaborative effort based coordinated by the Coast Salish Gathering to support a website based information sharing program with 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.

## Water Quality Information Gathering Project

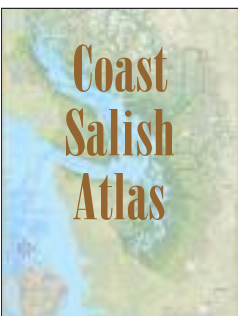


A collaborative effort coordinated by the Coast Salish Gathering to support and develop a water quality gathering project by the Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations. The Coast Salish leadership has joined forces to begin a unique process of gathering and sharing water quality information from the Salish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

## Coast Salish Atlas



The project is to create an atlas that encourages appreciation of the Coast Salish view of "Who we are and where we come from." This CSG Atlas will serve as an historical and present-day record documenting key cultural and ecological transformations for the 66 tribes of the Coast Salish region, whose traditional paths follow the watershed borders of the Salish Sea Ecosystem. Their cultural and indigenous lifeways stretch from the mountains to the water, from the waters of Powell River, down through Vancouver, Frasier River, north and south Puget Sound and and to the shores of the Washington Coast. The atlas will be similar in concept to the Sto:lo - Coast Salish Historical Atlas which was published in 2006.

# 2008 COAST SALISH WATER QUALITY PROJECT A Blending of Science and Tradition

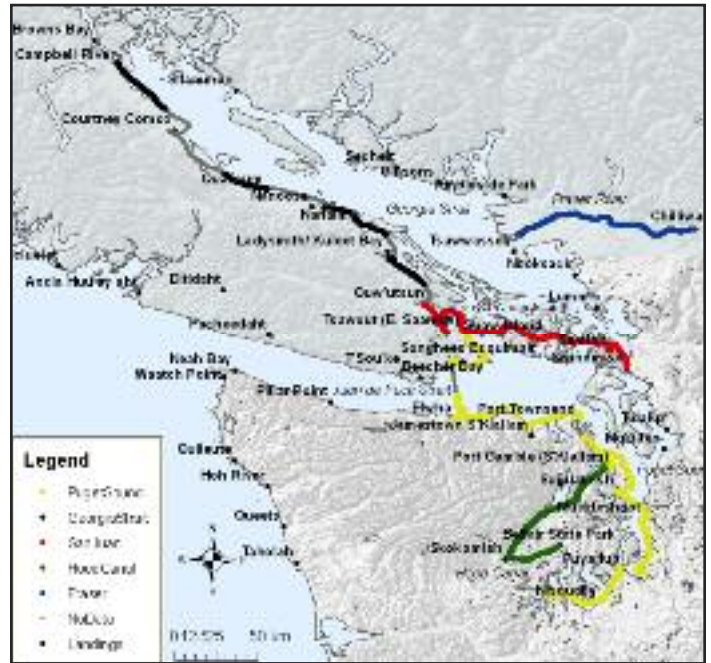
In February 2008, the Tribal Journey Water Quality Project was presented to the Coast Salish Leaders at the Coast Salish Gathering in Tulalip, as a partnership between the Coast Salish people and the United States Geological Survey (USGS).

This partnership provides a unique opportunity to gather environmental quality information that will support Coast Salish Nations and governing bodies to be better informed of and able to better manage the Salish Sea Ecosystem along the traditional highways of the Coast Salish people.

From the beginning support from the Canoe Families was essential. Blending new and old technology creates the ideal sampling design for water quality testing. No other environmental monitoring agency has been able to sample a trans-boundary waterway as thoroughly as the Tribal Journey Water Quality Project proposes to do.

Following the pathways established for 2008 Journey to Cowichan, water quality testing routes were chosen to monitor the most Salish Sea territory possible, and we sought permission from families to carry the sondes to Cowichan.

The Homalco family came down from Campbell River, Sto:lo Family came from Chilliwack down the Fraser River, Swinomish Family went through the San Juan Islands, and Squaxin Family traveled through Puget Sound on their way to Cowichan.



We requested permission from Skokomish Canoe Family to paddle through and collect data in their territory of Hood Canal. USGS scientist and project advisor, Eric Grossman, paddled the Hood Canal alone capture the data set for the water body.

Each Canoe participating in the Project was equipped with a GPS and a YSI sonde that measured surface water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, salinity, and turbidity. Data was logged onto the equipment at 10-second intervals with GPS positions recorded with each point.



The first canoe conducting the water quality monitoring left from Squaxin Island on July 15, 2008. By July 28, 2008 when all the canoes had safely landed at Cowichan we had four sondes in the water simultaneously collecting information. Data was successfully collected for over 80% of the Salish Sea territory, with over 42,000 data points covering 570 miles!

**The initial water quality data results, Tribal Journey videos and podcasts, publications, Tribal Journey Water Quality press can all be found on the USGS sponsored website [www.usgs.gov/coastsalish](http://www.usgs.gov/coastsalish).**

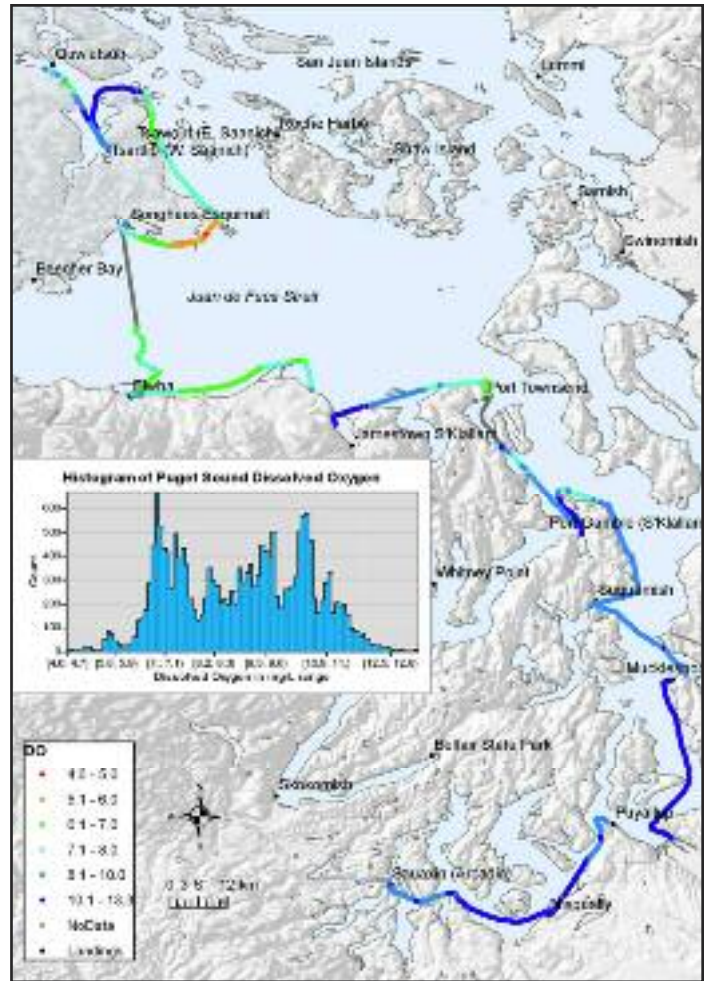
Data from the 2008 Tribal Journey Water Quality study showed that measured conditions throughout the Salish Sea were mostly good to excellent according to Washington State water quality standards.

Exceptions that may warrant further consideration or showed interesting patterns occurred in Hood Canal, Fidalgo Bay and offshore of Victoria BC. Temperatures of 70°F are not common in the Salish Sea but do occur where circulation is low and after long hot summer days. Temperatures at this level start to affect plant and animal growth, restricting salmon distribution, and aiding algal blooms.

Shoreline structures can alter water quality and in Fidalgo Bay reduced dissolved oxygen in coastal waters appeared to be associated with Marchs Point jetties. Dissolved oxygen levels within the jetties and their impact to organisms throughout Fidalgo Bay remain uncertain. Low dissolved

oxygen was also measured offshore of Victoria where the waters are generally thought to be well mixed and it could be related to urban runoff.

The real power of this Project is in blending the scientific findings with the environmental knowledge of Coast Salish peoples and Tribal Journey travelers, being able to inform communities of impaired water quality when it is identified real-time, and being able to detect trends in environmental impairment through time by repeating these studies year after year.



Global climate change and land use activities are impacting the sea in ways we do not fully understand. The Tribal Journey Project has the ability to inform the world of the patterns and processes that affect the marine resources along the ancestral highways of the Coast Salish peoples.

Planning is underway to enhance the 2009 Journey to Suquamish Water Quality Project, with studies of water quality through the water column and patterns in phytoplankton communities that feed the Salish Sea food web. The more information Coast Salish Leaders have to show where and how water quality is impaired, the more we can improve resource management and planning for our sacred waters.



# Top US Conservation Award for Water Quality Project

The Coast Salish – U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Tribal Journey Water Quality Project was recognized recently with the Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award for their studies to help restore nearshore marine habitats and ecosystem functions across the Salish Sea.

The award recognizes the strength of collaborative activities such as the USGS partnership with the Coast Salish Western Washington Tribes and British Columbia First Nations. This cooperative effort combined traditional Tribal ecological knowledge and USGS science during the 2008 Tribal Canoe Journey to research resources experiencing decline in the Salish Sea, which includes Puget Sound, Georgia Straits, and Straits of Juan De Fuca.

"The Salish Sea Ecosystem sustains our indigenous life way as People of the Salmon and Shoreline," said Swinomish Chairman, Brian Cladoosby. "We say in our Lands, when the Tide is out, the Table is set. Our way of life depends upon a healthy ecosystem that stretches from the mountains to the tidelands. Through the partnerships and project, we have a stronger science and policy capacity to protect the human health of our people, our culture, and aboriginal and treaty rights of our Nations. "

During the Tribal Journey, members of western Washington Tribes and British Columbia First Nations traveled in more than 100 canoes from locations throughout Washington and British Columbia to Cowichan First Nation in Duncan, B.C. Five of those canoes were very special. Each canoe towed a state of the art water-quality probes and Global Positioning System units. From north of the Strait of Georgia to southern Puget Sound, canoe families played a very big part in recording the health of the Salish Sea.

In all, 607 miles of the Salish Sea was mapped and over 45,000 data points for specific water quality components were recorded including; surface-water temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, and turbidity. Canoes are ideal because they are slow moving and do not add any toxins to the environment. USGS scientists Eric Grossman and Swinomish Scientist Sarah Akin collaborated with USGS scientist Paul Schulster to develop a marine based gathering project and support technical expertise in planning and conducting the study and analyzing the data.

The Coast Salish Nation is the trans-boundary indigenous and aboriginal group that stretches from north of Powell River through all of Puget Sound and down the Washington Coast. Approximately 550,000 square miles and 600 million acres of the Coast Salish region were represented by over 50 tribes and bands. In February 2008, elders, chiefs, and representatives from more than 50 tribes and first nations formally adopted a mission and action agenda at the 3rd Coast Salish Gathering with a goal of developing policy and support sound science for the restoration and protection of coastal ecosystems of the Salish Sea.



Two of the project coordinators are USGS scientist Eric Grossman and Swinomish scientist Sarah Akin



The Director of the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council, Jon Waterhouse brought the Coast Salish Gathering Leaders the experience of conducting water-quality studies during a canoe voyage that was successfully demonstrated during a 1,200--long canoe trip down the Yukon River in summer 2007.

"The Yukon River Healing Journey was developed to check the pulse of the river and it was up to our team to find a way," said Director Waterhouse. Yukon River's Biologist, Bryan Maracle and Schuster developed to the concept of "marrying culture and science," by dropping a water quality probe on the side of a canoe along the Yukon River. The Healing Journey started from Moosehide, Yukon Territory, Canada and landing in St Marys, Alaska, a 1700 mile paddle.

The Healing Journey and the Washington Tribal Journey shares a common purpose of blending culture and science through water quality testing and testimony from indigenous communities along the waters system of environmental changes and issues.

Contributions for the Project was supported by Northwest Straits Commission, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, USGS and the Potlatch Fund.

To learn more about the project visit <http://usgs.gov/coastsalish> or [www.tribaljournays.com](http://www.tribaljournays.com)