

Coast Salish GATHERING

Together for the Salish Sea - UPDATE OCTOBER 2008



MEMORABLE JOURNEY AND A NEW PARTNERSHIP

Thousands of paddlers and supporters are still remembering Tribal Journeys 2008 - *Paddle to Quw'utsun*.

There were 110 canoes - the most ever - and five of them were towing high-tech probes that collected data from throughout the Salish Sea. It was a unique blend of traditional and modern knowledge.

The partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey began at the last Coast Salish Gathering at Tulalip. The multi-year water quality study brought together youth and elders, scientists and Coast Salish leaders as well as the families, skippers and pullers of our canoes.

And now preliminary data from more than 42,000 measurements along Tribal Journeys routes confirms many of our concerns about the state of the Salish Sea. More details are on Pages 4-5.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SALMON

Salmon' - that single word was used to sum up the Coast Salish position when our leaders met with Canada and USA at Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in September.



Randy Kinley, Lummi; Chief Ron John, Chawathil; Ray Harris, Hul'qumi'num; and Grand Chief Clarence Pennier, Sto:lo

Randy Kinley Sr of Lummi Nation used the word to help pass a powerful message to officials from the Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada.

"Salmon is the milestone. It needs clear, cool water and good habitat. Salmon's quality of life is our quality of life," he said.

"We don't have time to wait for models from you... We have the experts. But our philosophy and ways of life are so different. How do we bridge this gap?"

Chief Lydia Hwitsum told the EPA and EC that: "The Coast Salish *m u s t i m u h w* (people) have to play an integral role. There is more than a discussion to be had here. We need meaningful engagement."



Chief Hwitsum

More about SOC on Pages 2-3



Chief Lydia Hwitsum and other Coast Salish leaders along with representatives from the EPA and Environment Canada at the Swinomish meeting

Salmon the icon

- continued from Page 1 -

US and Canada officials brought their Joint Statement of Cooperation (SOC) on the Georgia Basin-Puget Sound draft 2008-2010 action plan: *Initiatives for the Salish Sea*.

But Chief Hwitsum of Cowichan explained that the Coast Salish had to play a central role in future discussions and creation of documents.

Chief Hwitsum represents the BC Chiefs on the SOC committee. Her responsibility will be to ensure that Coast Salish environmental policy and actions are represented in a respectful and meaningful way with federal, state and provincial agencies.

"This is a young relationship in context of our long reliance on this land," Chief Hwitsum said of the work with the USA and Canada.

"We're pulled in all directions and have to make choices where we focus our resources," she said, adding that the Coast Salish have to have the capacity "to bring development along meaningfully" as well as funding.

Kinley added that the Coast Salish discussions were about more than just funding for all the work that is needed to preserve and protect the Salish Sea.

"There's no way anyone has deep enough pockets to buy our way out of this problem," he said.

"We have to change the way non-tribal people think and to remember... salmon is the icon."

SPEAKING TO GOVERNMENT



We need to be partners - "We're here to help our people back home. A lot of what you're hearing are things we don't normally share... We're all the same, but we're different... Don't say couldn't. We can. Our bath holes are gone because of what's considered progress. We don't expect you to understand. It's a hard struggle to sit here and talk about the lives we live - our teachings. We need an equal partnership. Are we really working together?" - Chief Wayne Morris, Tsartlip.



Taking care - "We have to learn how to take care of Mother Earth and how to take care of one another. We must be very patient." - Kevin Paul, Swinomish Senate.

The land doesn't care - "We can't waste any more time. That ecosystem, that aquifer, that eagle... they don't know the difference between a government, a Tribe or a First Nation. The land doesn't care. How do we live here collectively and save this land? We are your best asset. We are the environment. How can we not be part of this language. We are the language. These discussions have to be meaningful. Meaningful means to have forethought rather just an afterthought." - Patti Gobin, Tulalip.



A piece of pie - "Non-tribal people look at it a just their piece of the pie. We, as Indians, look at the whole." - Randy Kinley, Lummi.

Being holistic - "We have to be holistic and ask where does the pollution come from and how does it affect all of us. Governments are still looking at the small picture. If we're really partners, we can push a lot harder and try to change governments' point of view." - Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas



Thank you for choosing this path - "Your career paths are almost on the same path as ours. Thank you for choosing this path in your life... We should be celebrating our harvest now, but we aren't the situation is desperate. We don't have salmon on our plates... There are great possibilities here. Thank you for the heartfelt attempts on your part." - Ray Harris, Hul'qumi'num.



We're all in this together - "We're all in the quagmire together. We have to stop making popular decisions and start making right decisions. We at Musqueam ask if this process is worth it. We think it is." - Nolan Charles, Councillor, Musqueam.

Call to Action

The Future of the Salish Sea: A Call to Action is the title of the biennial Puget Sound Georgia Basin Ecosystem Conference in February in Seattle.

For the first time Coast Salish Tribes and First Nations will play a major role in the proceedings as they join scientists, policymakers, resource managers, business leaders, elected officials and



others in the opportunity to apply shared knowledge (both traditional and modern) by developing priorities and commitment to future engagements.

Registration opens in November. Full details are at:

www.psgbconference.org

The Deer Hide and the SOC

Participants from all levels of government at the Coast Salish Gatherings at Cowichan in 2007 and Tulalip in 2008 signed a map on deer hide entitled *Together for the Salish Sea*.

It is that simple, but powerful, document that the Coast Salish see as being our 'official' statement of cooperation (SOC).

The draft SOC presented by Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency came in for some criticism.

But Charlie O'Hara, director of Swinomish's office of planning and community development, pointed out that: "When the SOC was developed in the late 1990s, it had very little input from the Coast Salish."

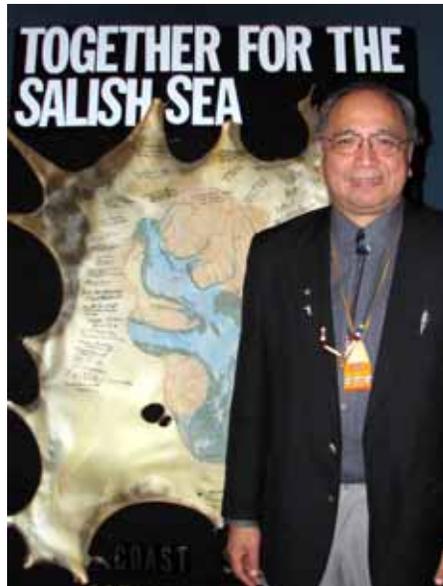


Charlie O'Hara

He went on to list five areas of significant work underway or being planned by the Coast Salish that will make a difference:

- 1- Development of a Coast Salish Atlas;
- 2- The Salish Sea water quality project ("This should not be funded out of Tribal or First Nation's money");
- 3- Continuing support for future Gatherings;
- 4- A Coast Salish conference on traditional knowledge and science; and
- 5- Creation of a Salish Sea trust fund for on-going preservation and restoration work.

"We are very unique because there is one indigenous group that occupies the entire Salish Sea area," O'Hara said. "This is a very powerful weapon and



Before he became Lieutenant Governor of BC, Stephen Point, of Sto:lo Nation, was a signer at the 2007 Gathering in Cowichan.

Coast Salish should take advantage of that."

Richard Parkin, an EPA director, said developing various SOC's over the years has been a learning experience for government agencies.

"At our first five conferences, we only looked at western science, but that's changed.

"Now we even have storytellers. Through information, knowledge and a different approach, there may be a way."

Mike Rylko, Puget Sound estuary coordinator for the EPA, agreed and said he was optimistic that the SOC showed ways of moving ahead.

"Stories happen in all the small places," he said.

"The SOC demonstrates new approaches and new ways of doing things on the ground."

LEGAL OPINION

When the first draft of the 2008 SOC action plan was presented to Coast Salish leaders in June, it was decided to get a legal review of the document as well as the implications of signing it.

Taking on that task was Renee Racette who is a legal counsel for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group based at Chemainus First Nation.

Could be prejudicial

She warned that while no legally binding promises were made in the SOC, formally signing the document could have "prejudicial effects" in the future.

"These types of agreements tend to implicate the parties involved as they were participants in the process later on," Racette wrote.

'Soft' on environment

Racette described the SOC as being not comprehensive and "overly brief on the actions. The actions are stated broadly and tend to reflect soft environmental pledges".

The word 'soft' appeared again in the conclusion of Racette's review.

Although the action plan provides 'soft' environmental promises, it is the actual collaboration and relationship building that may result in great future endeavours."

WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Rick Parkin of the EPA was asked why he and other government people decided to work for the environment. This is what he said: "We're trying to make a difference. That's why we end up here. We're decision makers for the bureaucracy.

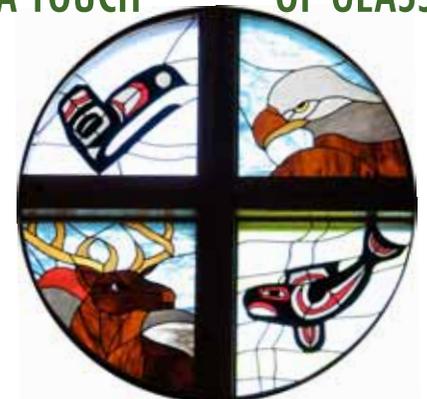
"There are seven million other people around the Salish Sea and they don't all have the same thinking about the

environment. But those seven million are the real decision makers on how we will move forward. But society hasn't decided yet.

Many of those decision makers have no real knowledge or desire to change. They just know that it's real pretty around here.

"That's our job. We can all help them to learn."

A TOUCH OF GLASS



The stained glass window in the Swinomish Spiritual Centre caught everyone's eye and was recognized as a meaningful symbol that represented the elements of being Coast Salish.



The Homalco canoe – one of five canoes towing water sampling probes through the Salish Sea – collected data on its trip from north Vancouver Island to Cowichan. At left is Clinton Charlie carrying the probe and other gear after the canoes were welcomed to Chemainus First Nation near the end of their journey.

Canoes probe the Salish Sea

They came through south Puget Sound, down the Fraser River, through the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Strait of Georgia.

When the idea of measuring water quality during Tribal Journeys 2008 was first presented to leaders at the Coast Salish Gathering at Tulalip in February, no one could have imagined what the journey would become.

The preliminary results of the first year of a unique partnership between our canoe families and the U.S.

Geological Survey were put on display for our leaders and government officials at the Swinomish meeting in September.

Swinomish Tribe's project manager Sarah Akin said: "This first year was to see if we could do it. We found out that we can!"



Sarah Akin

TESTING THE WATERS

The \$20,000 probes towed behind the canoes collected five different types of data on water quality.

- **TEMPERATURE** – Water temperature affects chemical reactions and growth of living organisms;
- **SALINITY** – The amount of salt in water affects distribution of species as well as smolting and spawning;
- **ACIDITY AND ALKALINITY** – The pH of water not only controls a variety of growth processes, but also affects the amount of calcification in shellfish species;
- **DISSOLVED OXYGEN** – The amount of oxygen dissolved in water controls how nutrients are cycled and biodiversity;
- **TURBIDITY** – The amount of suspended matter in water (what makes it cloudy) can limit productivity, the amount of light and the function of gills. High turbidity can cause the spread of bacteria and other contaminants and bury the substrate.

Akin and Eric Grossman of the USGS told of the 42,000 separate measurements that were taken along 570 miles (917 km) of the journey to Cowichan.

"We are looking at the patterns and causes of water quality and in time hope to



Eric Grossman

detect trends in change," Grossman said. "We are already finding interesting issues."

Akin said the project was the perfect blending of the traditional knowledge and practices of the canoe families with modern science and technology.

The collected data was sent daily to the USGS and by the next day it was posted on a specially-created *2008 Coast Salish Water Quality Project* web site.

A story heard 'round the world

The message about the Salish Sea and the Coast Salish Water Quality Project was sent around the world thanks to the internet and the good work of USGS.

Jennifer LaVista, a USGS public affairs specialist based in Washington D.C., coordinated the news coverage of the canoe project. Her articles were covered by a wide range of media, from television to newspapers, including:

- ✓ *The Guardian*, one of the largest daily newspapers in Britain;
- ✓ CanWest News Service, the largest newspaper and television chain in Canada; and
- ✓ McClatchy Newspapers, a U.S. newspaper company.

But the story didn't end there. There was television coverage throughout the



Eric Day, Swinomish Tribe canoe skipper; Brian Cladoosby, chairman of Swinomish Tribe; Bob Doyle, USGS deputy director and Eric Grossman, USGS scientist. appeared at a July news conference at Swinomish Indian Tribal Community.

States, as far away as Hawaii and on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network throughout Canada. Several radio stations also covered the story. Specialist media outlets such as the Environmental

News Service and *Traditional Knowledge Bulletin* published articles as did *National Geographic* and *Northwest Indian News*.

www.usgs.gov/features/coastsalish



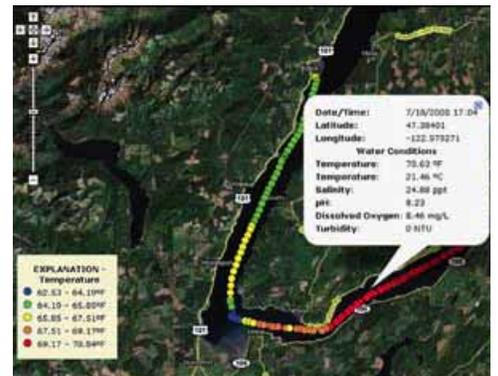
ONLY 'FAIR'

The preliminary data showed that water quality through out the Salish Sea was good, however some areas that may be of concern cropped up including south Puget Sound, Fidalgo Bay, Victoria and the Saanich Peninsula.

At the upper left is a Google map showing data points in Fidalgo Bay near Anacortes, an area already studied by Samish Nation.

Upper right is the Hood Canal. Draft data revealed very high water temperatures which can affect both plant and animal life.

Below left is the Saanich peninsula north of Victoria, BC. Draft data showed lower dissolved oxygen along its eastern shore that is generally more mixed than its western shore where we would have expected lower dissolved oxygen.



WHY CANOES?

A canoe is ideal for towing the water quality probes.

Motor boats, even at their slowest speed, move too



fast and create air pockets around the sensors, and impact the readings. Plus oil and fuel from engines could contaminate the data.

Blending new and old technology creates the ideal sampling design for water quality testing.



THE COAST SALISH PHOTO ALBUM

Tribal Journeys 2008 – Paddle to Quw'utsun



Suquamish Tribe will host the Canoe Journey in 2009 in honor of the 20th anniversary of the original Paddle to Seattle. The Suquamish are preparing for the arrival of 100 canoes to land in late July or early August of 2009. More information is available at: <http://tribaljournays.com>

THE COAST SALISH PHOTO ALBUM

Cowichan's North American Indigenous Games 2008



Portraits of some participants at the Coast Salish meeting in Swinomish

Historic Swinomish victory

A Federal District court judge in Seattle has ruled in favor of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in a case involving a diking and drainage district's failure to comply with the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act when replacing tidegates in its jurisdiction.

The Tribe brought the lawsuit against Skagit County Dike District No. 22 after years of efforts to reach a solution out of court.



Cladoosby

"Every court decision in our favor is bitter sweet," said Tribal Chairman Brian Cladoosby.

"We tried for years to work out something with the District to help it get into compliance with Federal law, but sometimes people need a court to clarify their legal obligations before you can make progress. Hopefully, this decision will provide District 22 and others with the guidance they need to work with us to find a solution that works for both fish and farms."

We Are Coast Salish

Congratulations to Chief Leah George-Wilson of Tsleil-Waututh Nation and Ray Harris of Chemainus First Nation.

Leah (Sisi-ya-ama) and Ray (Shulqwilum) were elected the co-chairs of the BC First Nations Summit at Squamish Nation. It will be Chief Leah's third term and Ray's first as co-chair.



George-Wilson



Harris

They are responsible for chairing Summit meetings as well as the administration and day-to-day operations.

Shock for Homalco

Early July, a group of Homalco people, including elders and children, spent the day on the water checking on the progression of juvenile sockeye passing through their waters.



Pink salmon with sea lice attached

What they found was shocking, but not surprising. Over the years, researchers are having an increasingly difficult time finding fish to sample. Bays, in which tiny salmon fry once found refuge to rest and feed, are now home to net cage salmon farms, acting as incubators for sea lice and disease.

The Juvenile Sockeye, as well as Pinks and Chum, which were sampled were covered with sea lice. Some fish carried as many as 20 lice. Recent studies have shown that one louse on a juvenile salmon is sufficient to kill them.

Mary Ann Enevoldsen, a Homalco counsellor, commented: "It's good that my grandmother isn't here to see this. She would have been heartbroken to see what's happened to the fish in our territory. It's devastating for our people."

Research in this area has been ongoing for the past five years, recording numbers and size of sea lice on juvenile pinks and chums that pass by open net cage fish farms on their migration to the ocean. Every year, they determine that sockeye passing through the area, past the fish farms are also afflicted with an abundance of sea lice.

This year the sampling has been extended to include the time that the Fraser River juvenile sockeye are understood to pass through these waters. Those fish meet many challenges on their passage to and from the ocean. It appears that sea lice (and possibly disease) from open net cage fish farms along their migratory route is adding an insurmountable, unnecessary hurdle.

Knowledge seekers

Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, WA has hired a new member to its science faculty. The college

said that the addition to staff is "an exciting time for us. We have embarked on a journey to implement our Native Environmental Science Bachelor of Science degree that brings native and western science perspectives, bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing together."

Groundbreaking... and big!

The word groundbreaking is often over-used, but it's certainly the right word here as the Tsleil-Waututh Nation work towards completing a truly groundbreaking plan for the Indian River watershed.



Developing a detailed land use plan for the 22,000-hectare watershed – the heartland of Tsleil-Waututh's traditional territory – is turning the concepts of consultation and accommodation on its head.

Just over two years ago, the Tsleil-Waututh Nation (TWN) signed a partnership agreement with the Province of BC to collaborate in developing an integrated land and resource management plan for the watershed. It marked the first time that a First Nation took the lead in a provincial planning process.

Normally, a First Nation either takes part as a major stakeholder or is simply consulted during the process.

For more info contact Debra Lekanoff
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