



Lummi Nation commends Dept. of Natural Resources for expansion of Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve

Historic decision permanently protects sacred places and fishing grounds

BELLINGHAM, Wash.—The Lummi Nation today applauded the decision by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to add 45-acres of aquatic lands to the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve.

“We thank Public Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark and the DNR for the decision to permanently protect the area that the Lummi people call Xwe’chi’eXen,” said Timothy Ballew II, chairman of the Lummi Indian Business Council. “This is an historic day for the Lummi, our treaty rights and our future generations.

“Across the country, from Xwe’chi’eXen to Standing Rock, Native people are celebrating the protection of our ancestral lands,” Ballew said.

In announcing the expansion of the Aquatic Reserve, Commissioner Goldmark also announced the denial of a proposal from Millennium Bulk Terminals to sublease state aquatic lands on the Columbia River.

“These decisions are in the best long-term interest of Puget Sound, the Columbia River and the people of Washington,” Goldmark said in a statement. “They are informed by years of study and consideration, and represent the best way to protect and conserve our state’s waterways.”

The DNR’s Aquatic Reserves Program protects aquatic resources and habitat. While the entire Cherry Point reserve is home to a diverse and productive environment for many marine species, the newly added area is also home to fish and shellfish that Lummi people rely on for commercial, ceremonial and subsistence.

The expanded reserve includes an area that was previously intended for the Gateway Pacific Terminal, a project that in May was denied permitting by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) because of the adverse impacts it would have on Lummi treaty fishing rights.

“The expansion of the reserve today is just as significant to the Lummi people as the Corps’ decision,” said Jay Julius, council member of the Lummi Indian Business Council. “In May, we protected Cherry Point from a single project. Now it’s protected from any projects in the future.”

Protecting Cherry Point will help the Lummi continue their way of life, Ballew said. “It’s an honor to fulfill the promise to our Elders who asked us to protect Xwe’chi’eXen forever.”

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Statements below can be quoted in full or in part:

The Yakama Nation applauds Commissioner Goldmark for his commitment to the environment and treaty rights. His decision to protect Cherry Point has a direct impact on Yakama. Coal trains that were destined for Cherry Point would have had to travel through the Columbia River Gorge and directly through the Yakama Reservation, which would be a direct violation of our treaty rights. The Yakama Nation will continue to stand with our fellow treaty tribes to protect our fish and cultures.

-JoDe Goudy, Chairman of the Yakama Nation

Thank you to Commissioner Goldmark and the Department of Natural Resources for acknowledging the importance of traditional lands to Treaty Tribes. Our rights, cultures and way of life revolve around the land and water and the resources that has sustained us since time immemorial. We are excited to work with Lands Commissioner-elect Hillary Franz and will support her strong partnerships that the Department of Natural Resources has with Washington Treaty Tribes.

-Brian Cladoosby, Chairman of the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Cherry Point continues to be a cultural and traditional means for the Lummi people, nurturing them physically and spirituality. It is a traditional place as well as a connection to their past and future, and symbolically gives others strength as well. Promises broken then now honored. Celebration of past, present, and future. Standing to protect and standing together with other Tribes and the world community. Cherry Point is a victory for humanity!

-Dave BrownEagle, Vice Chair of the Spokane Tribe of Indians