

Whidbey Native Connections Newsletter

APRIL 2025

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 6:30 pm, Next NCI Gathering on Zoom

This month we will host **the last NCI Zoom gathering until September**. In May and June, we invite you to take part in several in-person events with local Native Tribes and organizations. (See below.) In our Zoom gathering, we'll focus on those **Native-led events in which people have asked for our participation as volunteers**. Please come and join us in the best ways to connect with Native communities and form meaningful relationships between cultures.

NCI is taking July off though there will be numerous canoe journeys, pow wows, and other gatherings you can attend. We'll try to include information in this April newsletter on as many events in our region as we can.

VOLUNTEER AT THESE EVENTS

DINNERS for INTERTRIBAL YOUTH CAMAS BAKE AT PRI: Thursday May 8 and Friday May 9



We have been invited to make two dinners for participants in the annual INTERTRIBAL YOUTH CAMAS BAKE hosted by the [Coast Salish Youth Coalition](#), held at [Pacific Rim Institute](#) for the 7th year. We are honored to be invited to serve.

Clancy Dunigan and the Open Table folks have generously offered to cook the soups. The rest of us volunteers will bring salads, breads, desserts, fruit, tea, drinks, and anything else we are inspired to bring. To track numbers we need people to register in advance to prepare food, help set up c. 4:30, stay to serve and mingle with participants, then help clean up.

Sign up for May 8th and/or 9th by emailing Sarah Schmidt at 4bats@ixoreus.com.

TWO BLUE HERON CANOE FAMILY VISITS:

June 20-22 and August 30-September 1

The Blue Heron Canoe Family will camp at the County Fairgrounds in Langley, again at the Fiddle Faddle Farm area. For the past three years, we have provided support they have requested. It is a rare chance to mingle with the canoe family, learn crafts, and make friendships that last year to year.

This year they will be on Whidbey for two weekends, and we will need volunteers to help set up and take down tables and chairs for a community potluck meal, post flyers about the events, and generally be available to help as needed.



FRIDAY TO SUNDAY, June 20-22:

The BHC family will arrive, without a ceremonial canoe landing. They will offer various craft classes, native plant walks, and a community potluck followed by an evening of cultural sharing of songs and dances. Marcia and Clancy Dunigan have generously stepped forward to be volunteer coordinators.

To volunteer, email Marcia Dunigan at mdunigan7@gmail.com.

FRIDAY TO MONDAY, August 29-September 1 – Labor Day Weekend:

Mark your calendar: the Blue Heron Canoe Family will arrive by canoe, with a formal welcoming ceremony in Langley. They will offer classes again, as well as opportunities to go out in the water with them in the canoe.

PENN COVE WATER FESTIVAL: May 10, 11am to 5pm:



Image by Roger Purdue, courtesy of his family and PCWF

Native storytellers, Rosie Cayou, Lou Labombard, Swil Kanim, Rona Yellowrobe and Bruce Witham, songs by the Shifty Sailors, native flute with Peter Ali and Rona, dances by the Tsimshian Haayuuk dancers, and of course, the canoe races all day! Street vendors. **Check out the [schedule here](#). Get involved and sign up to [volunteer here](#).**

On May 9, Friday night at 7:00, As part of the PCWF, Seneca storyteller Lou LaBombard will tell myths and stories around the bonfire at Pacific Rim Institute (PRI).

MORE EVENTS TO ATTEND

BEAVER TALES EVENTS COMING UP:

April 11 and 12: Join BeaverTales for two days of celebration of the Coupeville Creative District, and support sʷədəbš Cultural Center on the Wharf in Coupeville. [Tickets on their website](#)

April 16, 6-8 pm: Native Flute Sound Ceremony, Activating COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS. Facilitated By Jessica Radiance. [Tickets on their website](#).

APRIL 15, 7:00 pm: FISH WAR MOVIE:

The feature-length documentary highlights the violent struggle faced by Indigenous nations in the Pacific Northwest to exercise their treaty-protected right to harvest salmon. This local screening is hosted by Whidbey Environmental Action Network (WEAN) and Whidbey Institute, at the Whidbey Institute in Thomas Berry Hall, 6449 Old Pietilla Rd, Clinton. [Tickets here](#).



The film will be followed by a discussion with panelists including Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission Chair and Fish War Executive Producer Ed Johnstone of the Quinault Indian Nation, Lummi Nation Councilman Dana Wilson, Native environmental scientist and documentary filmmaker Althea Wilson of the Lummi Nation, and others involved in the film and in Tribal fisheries stewardship.

APRIL 19, 9am-2 pm: KHIMSTONIK at Sacajawea Park near Pasco

Ione Jones of the Lower Snake River Palouse Tribe was our speaker last month. She shared the challenges that her tribe has had in being non-federally recognized, even though they were prominent signers of the treaty. Their lands were flooded by the dams on the Lower Snake River, so in addition to being non-recognized, they are land-less. Ione has steadfastly led her tribe in restoring the river by fighting to take down the dams, planting and tending native plants, and restoring their culture.

Ione Jones invited us all to gather with her and the Lower Snake River Palouse Tribe at Sacajawea State Park near Pasco, for a vibrant celebration of their ancestors' contributions and their culture, past and future.

[Click here](#) to find out more and to register.



Present-day Big Flat Overlook, ancestral lands of the Lower Snake River Palouse, currently managed by the U.S. Army Corps. Photo courtesy of KHIMSTONIK

APRIL 22 – Mother Earth Day 2025: Wake Up, Stand Up Rally, Bellingham

From **Children of the Setting Sun Productions**, 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM on Bay Street in downtown Bellingham. A Movement for Our Earth, Our Future, Our Collective Responsibility.

<https://settingsunproductions.org/good-words/motherearthdayapril22bellingham>

Held in collaboration with the Downtown Bellingham Partnership and other aligned organizations, the rally will uplift ancestral knowledge, amplify Indigenous voices, and inspire environmental stewardship across all generations.

“We are the land, we are the water, and together, we rise,” say the event organizers. “This rally is about raising our voices, taking action, and continuing the dreams of our ancestors through unity and community.”

MAY 5, 3:30-5:30 pm: WEAN Camas Walk at Pacific Rim Institute

If you want to go on a guided walk on the rare remnant prairie ecosystem at PRI, join WEAN (Whidbey Environmental Action Network) and PRI's prairie technician, Mosa Neiss, for this walk while the Camas is in bloom. Our speakers in February (Sam Barr) and May (Ione Jones) both spoke about the importance of Camas to Tribes throughout the Northwest. [RSVP here](#).



MAY 22 and 23: 20th Annual Vine Deloria, Jr. Indigenous Studies Symposium

2025 Theme: The World we used to live in: Acknowledging our past and the fight for indigenous sovereignty

Northwest Indian College Lummi Campus, 2522
Kwina Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226



The theme for this year's symposium reflects a profound commitment to the ancestral wisdom and struggles of Native peoples. This theme draws directly from Vine Deloria Jr.'s book, *The World We Used to Live In*, and his participation in the 2005 Robert K. Thomas Symposium. [Register here](#).

MAY 31, 2:00 pm: Johnny Moses – In Person! Edmonds

Johnny Moses – Live Storytelling on Saturday Afternoon, May 31st at Edmonds Public Library Community Room. FREE and open to the public. <https://www.seattlestorytellers.org/ssg/events/event-8280.html>

2025 POW WOWS IN OUR AREA

From Daybreak Star Cultural Center: *"POW WOWS are proud traditions that bring Native Americans of all tribes and cultures together to celebrate. The Pow Wows showcase traditional Indian cooking, jewelry-making, music, and especially dancing. Throughout the day, tribes from the United States and Canada dance in full tribal regalia. All are welcome, Native and non-Native alike!"*

MAY 10: WWU Spring Pow Wow, at Carver Gym at Western Washington University, Bellingham

<https://calendar.powwows.com/events/western-washington-university-spring-pow-wow/>

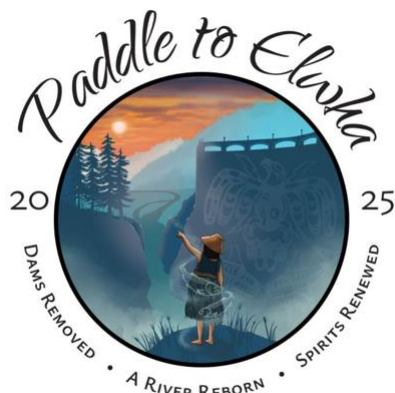
MAY 16-18: All My Relations Pow Wow at Skagit Valley College, Mt Vernon Campus

<https://calendar.powwows.com/events/all-my-relations-pow-wow/>

JULY 18-20: United Indians of All Tribes Foundation Indian Days Pow Wow, at DayBreak Star Cultural Center;

<https://unitedindians.org/seafairpowwow/seafair-powwow-2025/>

AUGUST 1st-5th: Paddle to Elwha -- ʔéʔt̓x̌w̌aʔ n̓x̌w̌šáʔy̌əm̌ Strong People



The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe will host the Annual Tribal Canoe Journeys, a celebration of Tribes from across the Pacific Northwest, that travel from tribe to tribe, sharing songs, dances, and culture. Final landing of canoes is on July 31, with protocol beginning August 1. [Tribal Canoe Journey Information](#).

Volunteer Registration:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f8bb72a7780949ab9bf7b543579018fa>

JULY 29, 2025 – QATAY CANOE LANDING, Port Townsend

Dozens of canoes will land and stay overnight in Port Townsend en route to Elwha. Volunteers will be needed to prepare and serve food and cleanup; more details to come when available.

WORKSHOPS

APRIL 17, MAY 1, MAY 15, MAY 29: ELEMENTS OF TRUTH: BEFORE RECONCILIATION, offered by kinSHIFT

Check out this series of Indigenous-led workshops, suggested by NCI member, Lars.

“Reconciliation must be rooted in truth; the Elements of Truth journey begins with **EARTH: Impacts of Colonization**. In our first workshop, we illuminate past and ongoing connections between settler colonialism, Indigenous self-determination, and the land.

“We ground our time together in Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being, so that we are better equipped to practice walking together toward truth.”

[Click here for more info and to register](#)

JUNE 2 – AUGUST 10, 2025: NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES FOR EVERYONE

Offered by Chickadee Community Services (Montana): “our goal is to promote Indigenous education and language revitalization and to serve educational needs in other worthy sectors related to **education of, by, and about Indigenous peoples**.” (NCI member Sarah Schmidt has been taking the course this winter, happy to answer questions.)

- Online course offered summer 2025. No live classes to attend.
 - Suggested donation: \$50-\$300 (give what you can; due by May 26)
- Now registering for June 2 – August 10, 2025.

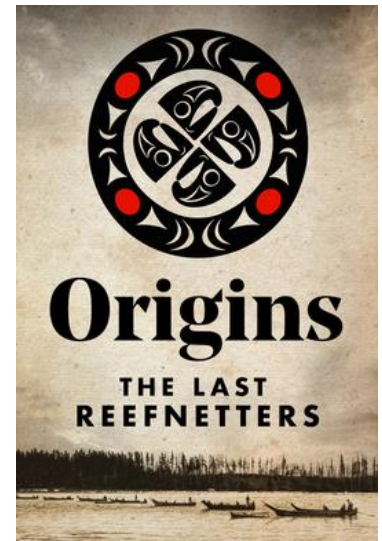
[Click here for more info and to register](#)

WATCH

CASCADE PBS ORIGINS DOCUSERIES: *THE LAST REEFNETTERS* (Five 10-minute episodes)

The Last Reefnetters premiered on Cascade PBS broadcast and streaming platforms on Friday March 21st at 8:50pm, with new episodes airing each consecutive Friday through April 18th. Watch now at <https://video.cascadepbs.org/show/origins-docuseries/episode/the-beginning-8i9a2p>

Reefnet fishing is an innovative method developed by the Lummi Nation and other Northern Straits Salish tribes thousands of years ago. To learn more about the series, check out this [Q&A](#) with Director Samuel Wolfe (who lives on Whidbey Island) and the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area, who generously co-funded the project through grants. Rena Priest (Lummi), a WA State poet laureate who spoke at a UUCWI service last fall, is featured. **Not to be missed!**



ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

TAKE ACTION NOW! SAVE OUR SALMON!

From the [Columbia Snake River Campaign](#) (CSRC):

SEIS NOTICE OF INTENT: PUBLIC COMMENTS NEEDED!

The Columbia River System Operations review is underway, and public support is critical.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation are re-evaluating how the Columbia and Snake River dams are managed in a new supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS), and they are accepting public comments on the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). **This is a crucial moment to advocate for the removal of four dams on the lower Snake River, uphold U.S. Government commitments to Tribes, and invest in a future where salmon and communities thrive together.**

[Click here](#) to comment, and for helpful tips to make your comment count

Add your comments before May 9, 2025!



COLUMBIA SNAKE RIVER CAMPAIGN

INDIGENOUS NEWS SOURCES and Resources for Action:

If you'd like to stay current on the news from Indigenous people and their communities, here are some excellent sources:

[Native News Online](#)

[Indian Country Today](#)

[High Country News, Indigenous Affairs](#)

[Seattle Crosscut, Indigenous Affairs](#)



Samish 13 Moons Calendar: Moon of Little Bullheads (April)

Illustration by Anabel Baker

[The Friends Committee on National Legislation](#) (FCNL) advocates for legislation that will protect tribal sovereignty and treaty rights. You can sign up for monthly updates. This group makes it easy to take appropriate action.

Here's their recent update on the Truth and Healing Commission bill in the 119th Congress:

<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2025-03/truth-and-healing-119th-key-differences-and-updates>

"The bill has a promising trajectory this Congress."

The UUCWI and WIFM convene on the traditional lands of the sduhubs (Snohomish People), the Lower Skagit People, Swinomish, and Samish. Descendants of these Tribes have lived here continuously since time immemorial. Many other people of Coast Salish Nations utilized the coast and nearby waters. We acknowledge the significant ways the Native People, their families and their communities are still here, continuing to steward this island in ways physical, spiritual, political, and social. We honor the elders of the past, present, and future, with profound gratitude

Whidbey Native Connections Initiative

is a justice initiative of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Whidbey Island, (UUCWI) and is supported by UU infrastructure, visionary foundations, and regional and national social-justice sister organizations, such as JUJusticeWA.

We are also supported in numerous ways by Whidbey Island Friends Meeting (WIFM) and the broader Quaker justice work.

Contact us at nciwhidbey@gmail.com