

Whidbey Native Connections Initiative Newsletter

November 1, 2025

Greetings, as our bigleaf and vine maples light up the forests and the Sun journeys South, taking light and warmth far away. In the Samish calendar, November is ***Sch'elkwásen***, the Moon of putting paddles away.

“Our canoes are put away when the waters become too dangerous to travel. Only very few brave the rough sea upon necessity.”

[From the Samish 13 Moons Indigenous Calendar](#)



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 6:30 PM-8:00 PM: Native Connections Zoom Gathering

At our October Zoom gathering, we watched the documentary film, ***Promised Land***, which follows two tribes in the Pacific Northwest, the Duwamish and the Chinook, as they fight for the restoration of treaty rights they've long been denied. In following their story, the film examines a larger problem in the way that the government and society still looks at tribal sovereignty.

Join us this month as we host a panel of sduhubš (Snohomish people) to hear about their history and discuss how the film pertains to their continuing efforts to restore their tribal treaty rights.

In their own words:

“We persist, resolute and resplendent”



The sduhubš (“Snohomish”) Tribe, much like a magnificent cedar tree, stands tall and unwavering amidst the tempestuous winds of history.

Our indomitable spirit can be likened to the cedar’s roots, firmly anchored to the Land, a testament to our unwavering commitment to our ancestral traditions and our profound connection with this sacred ground.

Just as the relentless winds may sway and strain the cedar’s branches, historical forces and injustices have sought to break the spirit of the Snohomish Tribe.

However, we, like the resilient cedar, remain unbowed, reaching for the skies in the face of adversity. Our story, akin to that of the cedar in the midst of a storm, serves as a testament of the enduring human spirit and unyielding strength of our people.

We persist, resolute and resplendent, for the sake of our Ancestors
and the generations yet to come,
forever grounded in our cultural identity.

[Quoted from the website, snohomishtribe.org](https://snohomishtribe.org)

REPORT ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY 2025



We were pleased to welcome 50-60 people at Langley Park on Monday Oct 13 for Indigenous Peoples' Day. As people made prayer flags and hung them around the park, we heard from Native speakers.



Three sduhubs (Becky Porter, Cynthia Campbell, and Robyn Porter) spoke eloquently, drummed and sang.

Tony Cladusbid (Lower Skagit/Swinomish) joined us to speak about the challenges he has faced due to his ancestors being forced off their traditional lands in what is now Penn Cove.



We heard from Langley Mayor Kennedy Horstman who spoke from her heart, reminding us that these lands were not 'discovered', but were inhabited, stewarded and treasured by the Indigenous people whose descendants we are lifting up this day. We all carry a responsibility to care for the land and respect the original inhabitants.

In the spirit of the Coast Salish potlatch communities, who always share and give gifts when they convene, attendees brought cans, boxes, and bags of food for the Good Cheer Food Bank. Together we donated over 120 pounds of food!

Watch for the prayer flags which will hang in our community during November, Native American Heritage Month.

All photos of IPD by Michelle Sakaguchi



NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

This month is dedicated to celebrating the rich culture, traditions, and contributions of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, while also raising awareness of the challenges they continue to face. Many events, special museum exhibits, festivals, performances, podcasts, a video series, and interviews are abundantly available.

For a history of how this federal designation came to be, [click here](#).

EVENTS and COURSES

MONDAY, NOV 3, 11:00 AM PST: Celebrate Native American and Indigenous Voices!

Join the **Penguin School and Library team and Booklist** for a fun and insightful webinar! [Register here](#). Five Indigenous creators, Rae Rose and Aly McKnight (THE SACRED STONE CAMP), Violet Duncan (BUFFALO DREAMER), Steph Littlebird (YOU ARE THE LAND), and Andrea Page (WHO WAS WILMA MANKILLER?), will talk about their creative processes, inspirations, and the cultural significance of their latest and upcoming releases. Mandi Harris (Cherokee Nation), a children's librarian and PhD candidate at the University of Washington Information School, will moderate. Stay-tuned after the panel to hear about recent Native American and Indigenous books great for all ages and readers!

SATURDAY, NOV 8, 1-3:00 PM PST: Decolonizing Our Activism: The 7th Fire, How to Be a Good Ally:

Register for yet another excellent, interactive workshop brought to us by **Friends Peace Teams' TRR program**. Sweetwater Nannauck (Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian) will explain how working with Native Americans toward social and environmental justice involves letting go of and dismantling colonial cycles of oppression. "Sweetwater offers an understanding of how culture and traditions are healing, build community, and provide a positive expression of reclaiming and expressing Indigenous knowledge, as well as practical ways to support Indigenous-led work and activism in the community." [Register here](#) for a small donation.



Sweetwater Nannauck is the Director of [Idle No More Washington](#), whose mission is "to create awareness and support for environmental issues that affect front line communities. To foster cross-generational alliance building through the use of multimedia, traditional knowledge, and a strong cultural foundation."

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1:00-3 pm PT: Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples

In this 2-hour experiential program, the history of the colonization of Turtle Island, the land that is now known as the United States, is presented through the words of Indigenous leaders, European/American leaders, and Western historians. This webinar is offered by **Friends Peace Teams' Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples (TRR) program**, whose goal is "to build relationships between Native and non-Native communities based on truth, respect, justice, and our shared humanity." [Register here](#)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 6-8:30 PM at Beaver Tales Coffee –Community Potluck and Reading at Swedebs Cultural Center on the wharf in Coupeville; in-person only, a monthly series.

For more events at Beaver Tales, visit their website: <https://www.beavertalescoffee.com/> or their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/beavertalescoffeeLLC/> for up-to-date info.



A Reading of "Winter White & Summer Gold"

How the People learned to plan for the seventh generation.

Shared by Paula Underwood, Keeper of a 10,000-year-old Oneida Oral History

Community Potluck
Thursday, November 20, 2025
6 – 8:30 pm

Location: Beaver Tales Coffee - S'wədəbš Cultural Center
and Creative Hub
26 Front St. NW, Coupeville, WA

Suggested Donation: Contribute as you are able

LAND LOSS TRAINING: Training in Colonization, Land Loss, and Resistance in the U.S.

As communities who hope to participate in true racial and ecological repair, the cornerstones of land justice, it is vital that we acknowledge the colonization, racism, and violence that has happened on this land, the role played by white and Christian institutions, and the ongoing and heroic legacy of resistance to such colonization.

This two-hour training by ***Land Justice Futures*** is meant to be experienced among groups of 3 or more people. The training itself is 2 hours, and can be broken into two sessions. Consider inviting 2 or more other people to join you. [Click here](#) for more information and to Register. Many ***Land Justice Futures*** programs and materials are free of charge.

MUSEUMS! MUSEUMS! MUSEUMS!

What a great way to spend upcoming rainy days and immerse yourself in Native cultures as you travel around our region. There are additional Tribal museums that we have not listed. Check for them before you travel!

Island County Historical Society Museums

We have two special local museums that highlight exhibits about the Native people whose traditional territories span Whidbey and Camano Islands. The museums have recently merged under one Board of Directors, and we're thrilled that two NCI associates are on the board: Lars Benson and Joel Christoe (sduhubš).



Coupeville Museum: Native People, Native Places

Open 10am-4pm (Mon-Sat) & 11am-4pm (Sun), at 908 NW Alexander St, Coupeville

A permanent exhibit featuring rare native canoes, stone and wood tools, many baskets, cultural interpretation, and a wonderful [interactive map](#) of Native Tribes of Whidbey and Camano.

Langley Museum, Coast Salish (sdhubš) Snohomish of South Whidbey

Open Thurs-Sat, 1pm-4pm, at 312 Second Street, Langley

“The new cultural arts gallery ... shares the history of the sdhubš (Snohomish) People of South Whidbey. Travel from time immemorial, through contact with Europeans and the signing of the Treaty of Point Elliot, to the reviving of cultural traditions today.”

Washington State History Museum (WSHM) in Tacoma, This is Native Land

Open Tues-Sun, 10-5, at 1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma

This Is Native Land, a new permanent exhibit at the WSHM, tells the story of Washington’s Native history since time immemorial, guided by the teachings of “we are the land and waters,” “with knowledge comes responsibility,” and “our sovereignty protects the people, the lands, and the waters.” This exhibition explains the sovereign status of Tribes, confronts historic and current challenges faced by Native communities, and explores themes of resilience, joy, and cultural revitalization.

The Burke Museum, Woven in Wool: Resilience in Coast Salish Weaving

Open now through August 30, 2026, Tues-Sun 10-5, at 4303 Memorial Way NE, in Seattle U District
[Get tickets online](#) for specific times.

This special exhibit at Seattle’s Burke Museum showcases both historical and contemporary woven items, including blankets, tunics, hoods, and skirts. Journey through the seasonal cycle of weaving, from gathering materials and spinning wool to dyeing with natural ingredients and weaving intricate designs. Along the way, learn firsthand from weavers and gain insight into the deep cultural and scientific knowledge embedded in every strand.

Hibulb Cultural Center, Current Exhibit:

Woven Ways: The Gift of Coast Salish Basketry

Open Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat-Sun 12-5, at 6410 23rd Avenue NE, Tulalip, WA.

Cedar, a gift from the Creator, has provided for Coast Salish people in countless ways. For generations, Coast Salish peoples have woven baskets from materials gathered from the land with care and deep respect. This exhibit explores the art, science, and spirit of Coast Salish basketry, honoring both the knowledge passed through hands across time and the gift of the cedar tree.

(Image courtesy of Hibulb Cultural Center)



Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center

The Duwamish Longhouse is open Tues-Sat, 10-5, at 4705 W Marginal Way SW, Seattle

Every day is a free day, and the Duwamish welcome you to take a self-guided tour, as individuals or small groups.

There is an annual **NOVEMBER ART MARKET 2025** from Friday -Sunday, November 28-30, from 10:00-5:00

Suquamish Museum

Open Wed-Sun, 9-4, at 6861 NE South St. Suquamish

Explore the rich history and the vibrant culture of the Suquamish people, and attend the **NATIVE MAKERS MARKET 2025**, on Nov 8-9 and Dec 6-7, from 10-3.

Whatcom Museum, Permanent exhibit: People of The Sea and Cedar

Open Wed-Sun 12-5, at the Lightcatcher Building, 215 Flora, Bellingham

“Through first-person storytelling, photography, art and artifacts, **People of the Sea and Cedar** presents both historical and contemporary perspectives about the Indigenous communities that have lived in, cared for, and contributed to this region since time immemorial. It centers the voices and experiences of the Lummi and Nooksack Tribes. The gallery explores Tribal traditions, cultural preservation, fights for recognition and equity, environmental stewardship, and artistic and political contributions.”

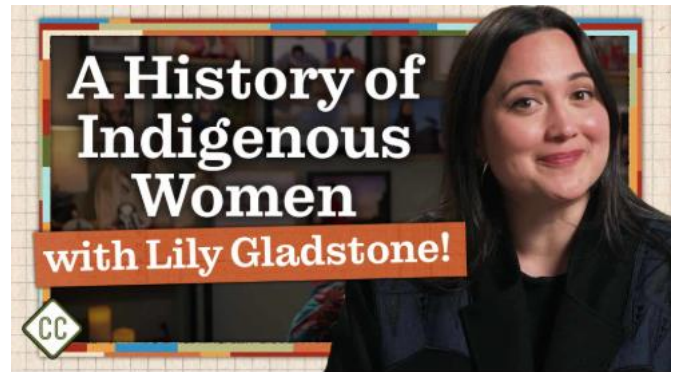
ARTICLES, RECORDINGS, VIDEOS, BOOKS

VIDEOS

Crash Course Native American History

Can't make it to a museum? Check out this **24-episode, YouTube series on Native American History**, moderated by Che Jim, an actor, comedian, educator, activist, and enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. Do you wonder what's meant by “Blood Quantum?” Or why so many treaties with Tribes were ignored or broken? How about trying to detangle Indian Law? With humor, Che Jim debunks stereotypes and misunderstandings, makes sense of complex laws like the Indian Reorganization Act, and explains what happened at Alcatraz and why land matters to Native Americans.

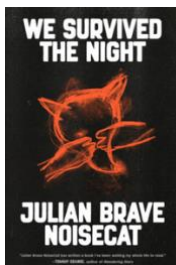
[Click here](#) for the website, where you can pick and choose which course to watch. We especially enjoyed Lily Gladstone's take on [A History of Indigenous Women in EP 19](#).



One World (We Are One) – [link here](#)

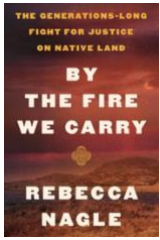
Music video released on Oct 14 for Indigenous Peoples Day by IllumiNative and Mag 7, a collaboration to show the richness, diversity, and beauty of Indian Country.

BOOKS



[*We Survived the Night*](#), by Julian Brave NoiseCat.

Part memoir, part history, told from inside his own experiences growing up between cultures, and with an accomplished journalist's skill. NoiseCat is perhaps best known for his debut film, **Sugarcane**, which was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary. This just-released book is riveting. Available from Sno-Isle Library. Stand in line! 82 holds to date on three versions (book, eAudiobook, and eBook.)

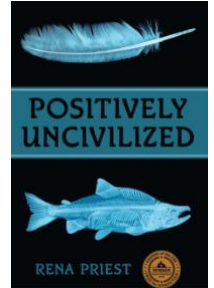


[By the Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Land](#), by Rebecca Nagle

“A powerful work of reportage and American history that braids the story of the forced removal of Native Americans onto treaty lands in the nation's earliest days, and a small-town murder in the 1990s that led to a Supreme Court ruling reaffirming Native rights to that land more than a century later.” Available at Sno-Isle Library and in the UUCWI library.

[Positively Uncivilized](#), by Rena Priest.

From an Indigenous perspective, *Positively Uncivilized* examines the impact of human inhabitants on the planet earth. Alongside personal accounts of the deterioration of salmon populations in the Pacific Northwest and the loss of Indigenous history, the twelve essays in this collection emphasize the necessity of community to overcome the damage done by human socioeconomic and political systems designed to isolate and shame those vulnerable to those unfair systems.



[Thunder Song: Essays](#), by Sasha taqwšəblu LaPointe.

Drawing on a rich family archive as well as the anthropological work of her late great-grandmother, Sasha taqwšəblu LaPointe explores themes ranging from indigenous identity and stereotypes to cultural displacement and environmental degradation to understand what our experiences teach us about the power of community, commitment, and conscientious honesty. [Click here](#) for *Writing Big Medicine: Author Talk with Sasha LaPointe*, on the All My Relations Podcast.

PODCASTS

[Truth, Reconciliation, Healing & Boarding Schools](#) | LANDBACK FOR THE PEOPLE S3 E5

In this episode, Nick Tilsen sits down with three amazing leaders of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS). NABS is conducting an oral history project documenting the stories of boarding school survivors for the Library of Congress. At the heart of this work is healing. Join us as we dive into the cross-intersections of LANDBACK, truth, reconciliation, healing and boarding schools.

[Nuns riding for LANDBACK?!](#) | LANDBACK FOR THE PEOPLE S3 E6

Nick Tilsen is joined by Brittany Koteles, Executive Director of Land Justice Futures. This organization helps religious land owners pursue land justice – shifting the narrative of land as a commodity to one of repair, restoration, and reciprocity. Land Justice Futures works closely with Christian communities and Catholic sisters to move toward repair.

According to Land Justice Future, the Catholic Church is the world's largest private landowner, with land on every continent, in every country across the globe. In the very first Catholic land return in history, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration will return two acres of lakefront property to the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa on October 31, 2025.

[Click here](#) for the **October 31 press release of this Historic Rematriation** – "the first known Catholic land return to a Tribal Nation as an act of repair for colonization and residential boarding schools, and the first rematriation done by women religious."

The U.S. Government shutdown and Native Tribes

We've been keeping an eye on how the current government shutdown is affecting Native people. Though the hot-off-the-press news is that judges have ordered the administration to use contingency funds to pay SNAP benefits, this is tenuous, and does not affect all the ways the shutdown is impacting the Tribal nations. The government must maintain Treaty and Trust responsibilities for Tribal Nations, and that is proving difficult for the U.S. Government to do during a shutdown.

Native News Online calls for reform from the Brookings Institute: "With the government shutdown bringing real-world consequences—from suspended services to furloughed Tribal program staff—the (Brookings) report contends this is a pivotal moment for reform. 'Rather than returning to business as usual,' the authors write, Congress should 're-evaluate and re-work how the federal government meets its funding obligations to Tribes and Native American people.'"

<https://nativenewsonline.net/sovereignty/government-shutdown-highlights-need-to-reform-how-federal-funds-support-native-american-tribes-brookings-report-says>

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:

[Underscore Native News](#) (Indigenous-centered journalism in the Pacific Northwest)

[Native News Online](#)

[Indian Country Today](#)

[High Country News, Indigenous Affairs](#)

ACTIONS TO TAKE: Stay informed by the **Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL)** [Native American Legislative Update](#), focused on Indigenous issues. You can sign up with FCNL for monthly justice updates. This group makes it easy to take appropriate action.

*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, and still do.
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 JUUsticeWA. 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